

# Bitter Sweet<sup>75¢</sup>

*The Magazine of Maine's Hills & Lakes Region*

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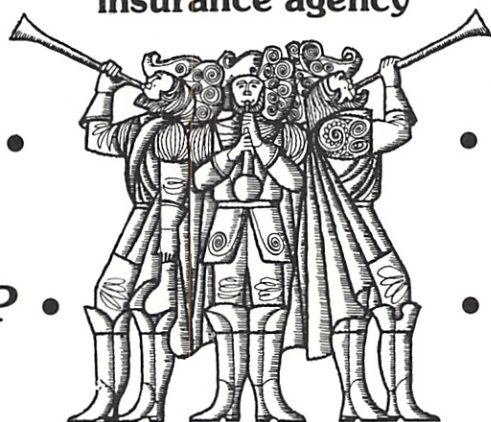
May 1979

Vol. 2, No. 7





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Dear Peter~

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Just last week I got Olie to come on over an break up my garden lot. He got a crankin' on that tractor an' cranked an' cranked. It finally took hol' an' threw Olie 'bout three hundred yards right into that manure pile. Olie came out pretty steamin' mad. He climbed right up on that tractor an' floored it 'bout four times. When Olie let go that clutch, the throttle stuck wide open. That tractor stood right up on its hind wheels, wheezed, coughed, sputtered, then took right off at a high rate of speed. Olie was flung from his seat but had a good grip on that stearin' wheel. Away they went, Olie an' tractor, alley-dopin' cross the pasture, up the hill an' clear outa sight. Pretty soon back they come, tractor an' Olie in the same position at an even higher rate of speed. WHIR-RRRRRR, CLANKITY! CLANK!! Sod an' rocks a flyin', back over the hill an' outa sight. They kept this up all mornin' 'til they ran clear outa gas right behind my fast movin' heels. Olie got off an' said "There, that was a fine piece of plowin'." I said "How much do I owe ya' Olie?" Olie looked far out toward the hill an' said "I think that fella thats a stompin' over that knoll is first in line for your egg money. If you can convince him THAT runnin' over his cedar post fence, mailbox, rakes, hoes, pitch fork, fertilizers, asparagus an' strawberry beds, seedlin's, clover field an' strippin' the barb wire from his posts was an accident, then I'll take two dozen of eggs tomorrow. Be seein' ya." There I was all a lone as Olie waved from that danged wild tractor.

~ Bert.

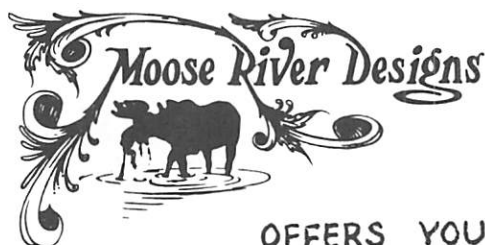
Dear Bert —

Best you send that fella right over. We've got some SPECIALS that might improve his feelings and your pocketbook. It's not too late to replace his plants. We have everything in stock, which that wild tractor wrecked. I heard just the other day, that machine leveled KING Hill and Olie had to rebuild it just as it was. He did one super job. You can't tell it was leveled. IF you need a couple of dozen of eggs we can help.

— Peter



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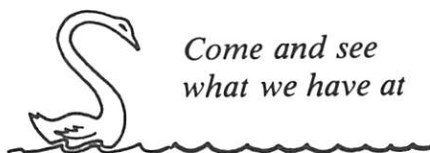


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The Rines' sold the business to Don White and family in **June, 1974**. Don, Barbara, and Mark White ran the store, remodeled the building and served the people of Cornish and surrounding areas in the fine tradition of IGA.

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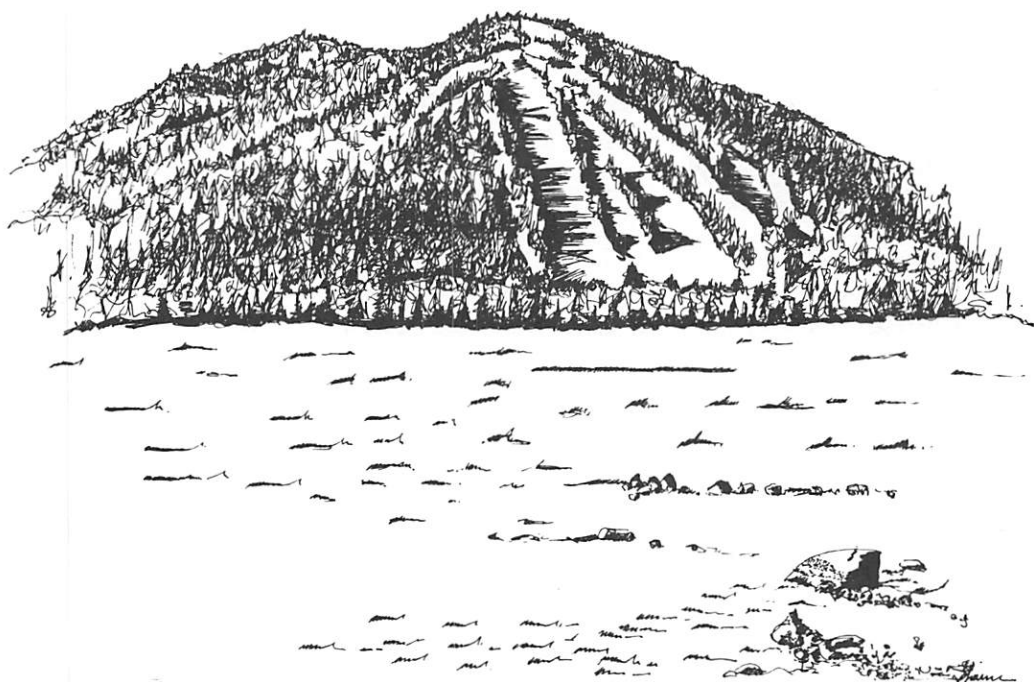


**CORNISH IGA FOODLINER**

Cornish Shopping Center



Route 25, Cornish, Maine



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## CREDITS

Illustrations: Ppg. 4, 30, Phoebe Levine; Pg. 8, Nancy Marcotte; Ppg. 12, 14, Ruth Sanderson; Pg. 18, Brenda Haynes; Pg. 22, Alison Kenway; Ppg. 24, 52, Nancy Jensen; Pg. 48, *Moose River Designs*, Paula M. Hutchinson. Photos: Pg. 15, Sandy Wilhelm; Ppg. 19, 42, Nancy Marcotte; Ppg. 34, 35, 64, Tom Stockwell.



# BitterSweet Views

Although the formal deadline for replies was March 31st, responses to **BitterSweet's** Reader Survey continue to come in. Here's what we've been able to glean so far:

From the more than 200 surveys tabulated to date, we find the typical **BitterSweet** reader is between the ages of 31 and 59, is either a professional worker or a homemaker, raises many of his or her own vegetables (but not meat), and heats at home with either wood or oil.

Almost all who responded to the survey were taken by the magazine's local scope. Some cited its "home style flavor," "mixture of reminiscing and up-to-date information," and "attractive ads" as additional pluses.

Historical pieces were generally the most popular magazine fare, although one reader found us "too heavy on yesteryear." People either loved or hated the brainteasers. Many found the poetry "far out." One young reader termed the magazine's humor "juvenile," while another asked to see more of it in each issue.

Cited most frequently as favorite magazine features were Dr. Lacombe's *Medicine For The Hills* and Inez Farrington's *Maine Is Forever*.

People asked to see more new and old photography, nature articles, material for children, and a "news and views" section. One New Jersey reader requested more real estate information and a listing of local radio stations.

People were in favor of the survey as a way of finding out what does—and doesn't—work, but they were overwhelmingly opposed to expanding our coverage area.

"**BitterSweet**" is covering a long-neglected area of Maine that is very precious to those who know it," wrote a middle-aged summer resident.

A Norway native added, "We need the magazine in this day and age. We need to know our history, where we come from, and what we are all about."

On another subject, Augusta Eastman of East Sumner notified us that her uncle Freeman Merrill, whose Stony Brook wheelbarrow mill in South Paris was featured in the February *Can You Place It?* was a man of many talents. Merrill (below) was also inventor of the reversible plow and received a Maine State Agricultural Society medal in recognition of his achievement. The award is now in Miss Eastman's possession. Merrill died in 1905. □



Sandy Wilhelm

*Sandy Wilhelm*

# BitterSweet

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**Subscription Inquires:** for quickest results, write above address or call 207/336-2517

**BitterSweet** is published the first of each month by **BitterSweet**, One Madison Avenue, Oxford, Maine 04270. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. by Western Maine Graphics, Inc.

**Subscription Rates:** U. S. Territory and Possessions, one year — 12 issues for \$8.00. 75¢/copy at newsstands. Canadian and foreign addresses are \$2.00/year additional. All correspondence regarding subscriptions, billing and/or payments should be addressed to **BitterSweet** at the above address.

**Contributions:** We encourage the submission of manuscripts, artwork and photography. We do ask that all such material be from local contributors and of local interest. Please submit to The Editor, **BitterSweet**, at the above address. We will return your material if it is accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Payment is made following publication. **BitterSweet** cannot be responsible for unsolicited material.

**Publication Date:** The first of each month.

**Editorial Closing Date:** Six weeks prior to publication.

**Advertising Deadline:** One month prior to publication date.

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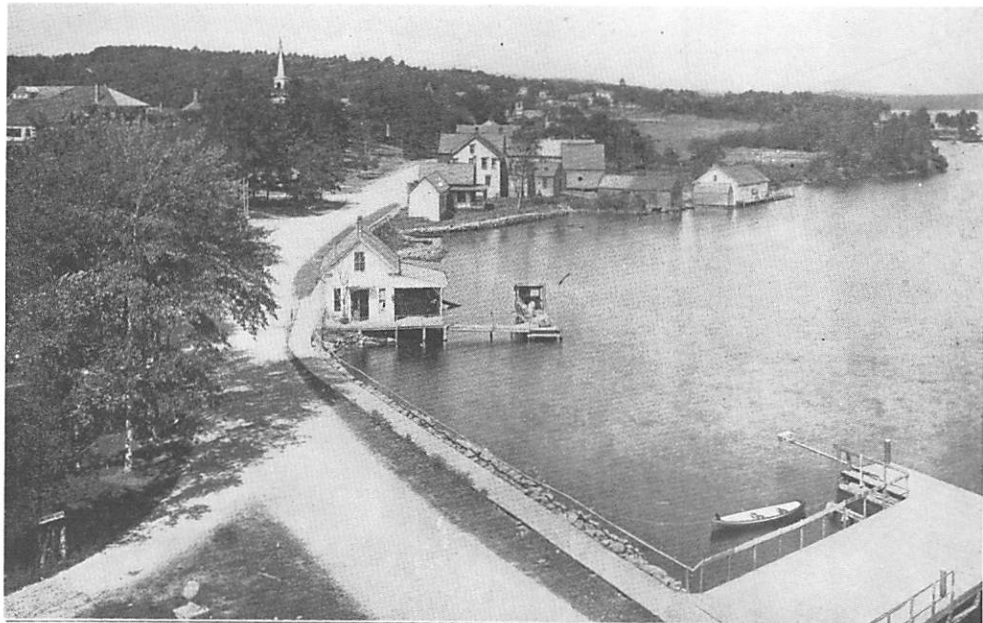
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# Can You Place It?



## PEDDLER PAGE

### ANSWER TO APRIL BRAINTEASER

The Hunter placed 3 cartridges on each pan. If these balanced, it would be a simple matter to pick the blank shell from the remaining two, in one more weighing. If one pan containing three cartridges proved lighter than the other, the hunter would lay aside the three heavy ones—and still find the blank shell in one more weighing operation by placing one of the light threesomes in each pan and the remaining one in his hand. If the two on the pans balanced, he would be holding the dud cartridge. If the two didn't balance on the pans, the blank shell would be on the high side of the scale.

At press time, the only winner of **Brainteaser XIII** was Donald Carrier of Poland.

**FOR SALE:** An SS Stewart Guitar, a 4-string Banjo, a 120-Bar Accordion with case, an Electric Organ. If interested, please call Paul Kennedy, 539-2515.

**FOR SALE:** Large 36-inch doll, \$20.00; White hand-knit bedspread, \$25.00; Old Vogue soft-body doll, \$20.00; Set of Staffordshire, England dishes, service for 8, never used, \$40.00. Please call or write Eleanor Homan, 1008 Main St., South Windham, Me. 04082, 892-6966.

**FOR SALE:** "Old Times In Woodstock," by Jefferson C. Gallison, M.D. Humorous sketches of people & customs in Paris, Waterford, Fryeburg included. Contact Ruby C. Emery, Bryant Pond, Me. 04219.

**WANTED:** A used old-style carpenter's bench vise—the metal only. Also wanted—a used bench lathe. Send details, age, price, etc., to Box 34, Paris, Me. 04271.

**WANTED:** Items for sale or barter, to be listed **FREE** of Charge on this page. Send listings to **BitterSweet**, P. O. Box 178, Oxford, Me. 04270. □

### BRAINTEASER XIV

Jim had two candles, one an inch longer than the other. He lighted the longer one at 4:30 p.m., and the shorter one at 6 p.m. At 8:30 p.m. they were both the same length. The first candle burned out at 10:30 p.m. and the second at 10 p.m. How long were the candles before he lighted them?

# Liisa Mummu

*fiction by Rebecca Cummings*



**"Like the rest of the Finns  
we knew, Petteri and Liisa were from  
Kuhmo, close to the Russian border.  
And, like the rest who came, they had known poverty..."**



When my days were still free and all my own, and when Mother still pulled back my wispy blond hair into two tight braids, I sometimes went with Father in the black Dodge pick-up truck through Buckfield to Sumner where he went to the sawmill for a load of sawdust to use as bedding for the cows. We would stop to see how Petteri and Liisa were getting on. Their home was a tarpaper shack with two rooms, but they welcomed us and gave of their best. After we shook hands all around, Petteri took down a covered glass jar from the shelf and let me reach inside for a Canada Mint that was like cold fire through my nostrils. Liisa put out a coffee cup for me along with the others. I sat at the table, my feet not touching the floor, playing with a lump of sugar in my mouth, feeling it dissolve as the hot milky coffee filtered through. The three of them, Petteri, Liisa and Father, talked in Finn, and I sometimes understood and I sometimes did not.

At the time I called her Liisa Mummu, or Liisa Grandmother, and that pleased her. Even though we weren't related, I was, in a sense, her only granddaughter, and she was happy when I ran to her with a hug and a kiss.

Like the rest of the Finns we knew, Petteri and Liisa were from Kuhmo, close to the Russian border. And like the rest who came, they had known poverty.

In the months when she was sick and dying and my mother took care of her, Liisa Mummu told Mother, who had been born in this country, how it was when she had lived in Finland. The dark hut she had lived in had no windows and there was but a hole in the roof to let out the smoke. The family of seven children lived on smelts from the lake and two hectares of rye. If they were lucky, their men killed a moose and they smoked the meat in the *sauna*. The little girls, with their mother, made clever snares for birds. They kept the birds frozen all winter, and in the spring they took them to the Kajanni fair to sell to the rich for the meat and fine feathers. And when there was nothing, her own mother sent her out to the big manor houses to beg from kitchen doors.

Sunday mornings she sat in the cold back pews of the ancient, domed Kuhmo Church. Of course she couldn't even see the altar from the poor people's section. They listened to the fat bishop exhort them to reach deeper

into thin pockets for the sake of the Lutheran Church. A mother would look at her hollow-eyed children and remember the *markka* hidden away in the crack of a wall, and she would tighten her lips.

After Liisa was confirmed, she was free to marry Petteri who lived on the other side of the lake. For a while, perhaps, her life seemed better when she had a husband, but Petteri didn't provide her with much more than her own father had. Petteri fished and worked in the woods like everyone else. At the end of the winter, he got together with the other woodsmen and burned the roots of the big pitchy pines in deep pits, skillfully mounded so that the rich black tar would run out a siphon that had been placed under the fire. They caught the tar in big, heavy barrels. For days they tended the fire so there would be no hot or cold spots to spoil the tar. To make the hot work in the thick oily smoke bearable, there would have to be enough firey vodka to last the many days and nights. All together there might be a hundred or more barrels of tar, as good as gold for the woodsmen.

Petteri and his brother Matti tried poling a long, low boat, heavily loaded with barrels of tar, down the spring-swollen lakes and rapids to Oulu. But the boat turned over and Matti was drowned. Petteri lost all forty barrels and barely made it to shore himself, with his clothes freezing to him.

The babies came for Petteri and Liisa, five of them in five years. That last one, a girl, was undersized and blue, and she lived for three days. The baby was buried in the Kuhmo cemetery, and for a marker, they put a hand-hewn cross.

The work never stopped for Liisa. Her babies needed food and clothes, so she served as a milkmaid, tending the fat-bellied, healthy cows at one of the big houses. And when she was through each day, she walked home and saw to her children, who fought with each other and noisily demanded her time.

A fever set in among the men of Kuhmo. They had heard about America, a country where they could buy land that wasn't owned by the rich and where it was possible to make a fortune in a few years. Within just a month there, it was said that one could earn enough dollars, as many as eighteen, to pay back the whole price of passage. Petteri came home from the Kuhmo store with his

eyes afire and told Liisa they would go to America. He would again try to take a tar boat to Oulu in the spring, and he would then go and build them a fine home. When he had the money, he would, of course, send for her.

When Petteri left, Liisa's faith in him and God made her believe that the time would be short and that she and the children would be with husband and father again. How she managed for three years alone is anyone's guess. They snared birds and ate fish and turnip, sometimes only fish and sometimes only turnip. Maybe the little girls begged as Liisa herself had done. But Liisa loved Petteri and was sure he would soon be sending for her.

Petteri had learned to read in confirmation class, as did most of the Finns who never went to school, but for him writing was a burden. Liisa never did learn to read or write despite confirmation. For these reasons, each received little news of the other over the many months. However, Liisa heard through one family and then another that Petteri had women in America.

Not only was Petteri breaking a sacred commandment of the church, he was sinning against her. Liisa knew what she had to do. For the next months she worked with new zeal. Every *markka* that was not absolutely needed she held aside in a little leather sack which she kept hidden away. When there was enough for steorage to Boston in America, she took the children to the homes of her sisters and began to walk to Kajanni where she could take the third-class rail compartment to Helsinki.

The tediousness of the journey was numbed by the memory of how she told the children that the separation would be short and that she would be sending for them all when she and Petteri were together again. Little Kaisa, too young to understand why her mother was leaving her with her Aunt Tekla, screamed and wouldn't let go of Liisa's legs. When Liisa left, she walked away quickly down the path and never turned to look back. But all her life she heard the cries.

She went to West Paris, Maine, and with the help of the Kuhmolainens there, she found Petteri. Petteri had not saved any of his dollars yet. In the winters he worked in the woods in others' woodlots, and in the summers he did farm labor on others' farms. His money never stayed with him. At the

end of the winter when he was paid, he spent his earnings on cheap whiskey, and for days he was neither within the world nor out of it. He was apt to find himself sick and broke in some strange town like Pittsfield in Somerset County, miles away from Paris. A robust man, when he had money, he satisfied himself any way he could. Even a little French girl from Lewiston or a Yankee from Norway understood the language of dollars.

Petteri and Liisa did not stay long in Maine. Petteri had heard that living in Minnesota would be easier so they made their way there. Minnesota was like Finland with its tall pine trees and many lakes and swampy flatness. Petteri and Liisa might have felt at home there except they didn't have their children and they had to struggle in English at the general store.

Petteri found work in the big woods outside Duluth. And he could count on trapping one, maybe even two wolves a month. The government bounty was forty dollars, big money for anyone. It would have been easy to save the money and soon have enough to bring his four children to America, but Petteri seldom took the money home. After cashing the check at the Savings and Loan, the weight of the money in his pocket was almost a burden which he eased at the Golden Star. When his feet finally took him back to Liisa, the money would be gone. If Liisa berated him for his drunkenness and reminded him of their children waiting to come to America, he struck out at her with such violence that she cowered humbly in the corner. And man, after all, had a right to some few pleasures.

Once or twice it happened that he found himself in jail with no money left to pay the fine. It was bad enough to be in jail, to know he would have to face Liisa afterward, but the worst humiliation was in the ribald taunting of his American jailers when they asked how the big Finn liked being in "yale."

They did not stay in Minnesota for long. Liisa was lonely. She wanted to go back to Maine to be with the Kuhmolainens there. Thoughts of her four children flitted through her head constantly. Living in Minnesota with no friends reminded her too much of her other losses. In Maine she felt she would be that much closer to Finland; the children wouldn't have so far to come.

Back in Maine, Petteri found work in my

grandfather's woodlots, cutting pulp in the winter. The couple set up a camp, two rooms covered with tarpaper, on the edge of Ukki's woodlot in Sumner.

The years passed, and Liisa still talked about her children, but she no longer talked about getting them. They would, after all, be all grown up. As far as anyone knew, she never heard from them nor did she ever try to communicate with them. Of course, she couldn't write, but maybe that was the easiest excuse.

When my brother Joel and I were just old enough to start school, Liisa was dying. My mother brought her into our home to nurse her.

Some days she was up, and she went outside to walk or she sat in the kitchen rocker and knit mittens for Joel and me. Some days she wanted to help Mother around the house, and she washed and dried the dishes. The dishes that she stacked in the cupboard were streaky and dull. While she napped, Mother stealthily took back the plates and cups and glasses and washed them herself with steaming soapy water. Liisa was a light sleeper and her hearing was keen, so Mother had to place each dish carefully or Liisa would have heard.

Liisa didn't take my mother's care for granted. One day as Mother was having her coffee alone, Liisa came out of the little corner bedroom and thrust a bundle of dirty, tattered dollar bills in Mother's hand. This twenty dollars Liisa had saved over her years in America, and she offered it in payment. Mother didn't want to accept the money from the old woman, but she knew she couldn't refuse it either.

Mother tried to keep Joel and me, with our chatter and squabbles, away from her, but Liisa always insisted that we could never disturb her. She let us play with our cars on the floor as she lay in bed and she let us share our picture books with her even though she couldn't understand them. When Mother scolded us for some mischief, Liisa *Mummu* comforted us.

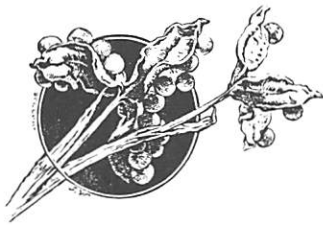
Liisa told Mother many times about her children, how they looked and what they were like. Each day new memories came back—a joke, a first step, their cries of hunger, the baby Kaisa's clinging to her when she left. She never asked Mother to write a letter to Kuhmo; she just said she couldn't write herself.

When she died in the charity ward of the C.M.G. in Lewiston, Mother was with her. Joel and I, wide-eyed, went to the funeral at the Lutheran Church and stood outside under the big elm in the cemetery across from Streaked Mountain and watched the box being lowered into the big hole. It was our first experience with death; we knew Liisa *Mummu* had left us.

My days were no longer free and no longer my own. Joel and I both went to the Brick School. I could not, on a weekday, ride with Father through Buckfield to Sumner to get a load of sawdust and stop in to look in on Petteri and collect my Canada Mint. But as it happened, Petteri didn't live much longer. He drank more and more, and in the winter of my second grade, a stranger found Petteri frozen in a snowbank not far from his camp. An empty bottle was in his hand.

There must have been a funeral for Petteri. Probably Father went and some of the old Finns. And when the winter waned and mud season was gone enough so that the road was passable, he must have been buried. I'm not sure how it was. Mother did not take Joel and me this time. □

*Rebecca Cummings, who now lives in Bangor, is a South Paris native of Finn descent.*

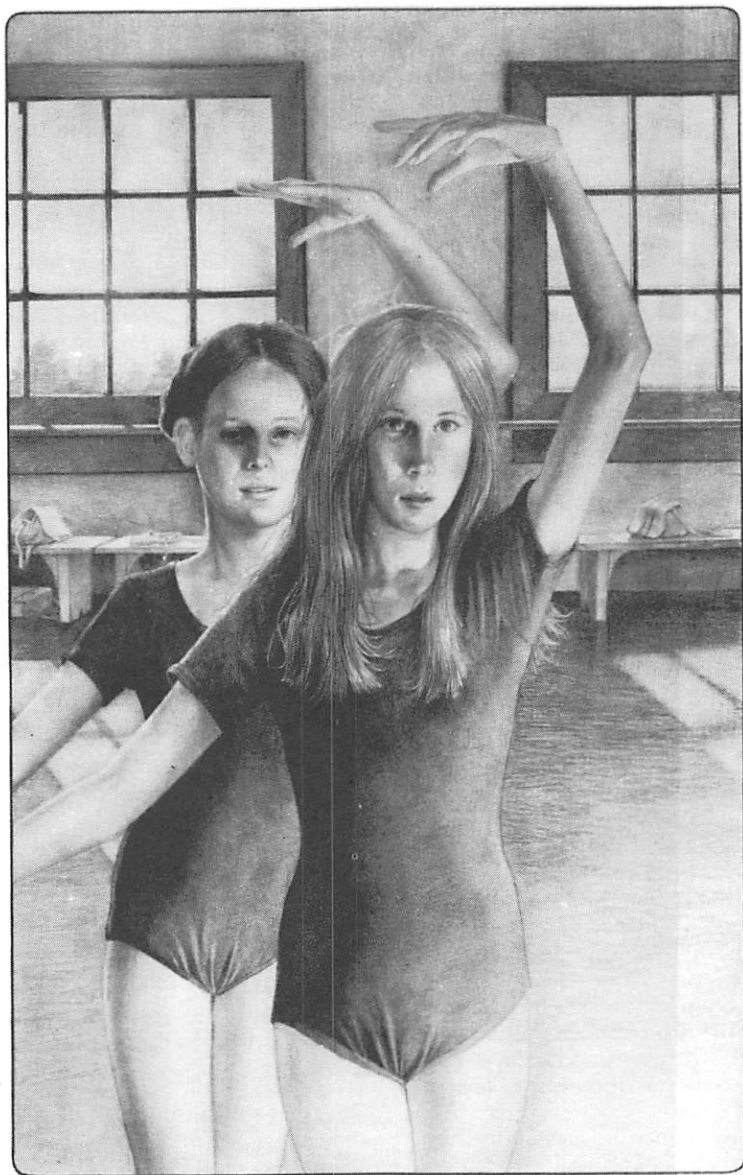


## SPRING

I showed your girl her first leaf today.  
It lay blanched and brittle upon the ground.  
I helped as she eagerly seized its stem  
and rolled it crackling across one palm.  
Inside, you sat outlined in overstuffed gold  
watching us perform our elaborate ritual  
from your winter station.

*Susan Thompson*

# Making It



**Sue Farrar's "On Stage"** *by Sally Clay*



Sue Farrar—resident of Bethel, teacher-choreographer for forty years, founder of the Children's Dance Theatre, initiator of the annual Living Nativity pageant—is also a writer. Her first novel, *Samantha On Stage*, will reach the bookstores in early May. Published by Dial Press, the book tells a story especially appealing to young girls. It carries a message of substance—and is beautifully illustrated by Connecticut artist Ruth Sanderson.

*Samantha On Stage* is about a young ballet student who competes with a Russian girl for the lead in their ballet class' production of the Nutcracker Ballet. The rivalry between Samantha and Lizinka leads to a close friendship and a sharing of the two cultures.

Through Lizinka, Samantha learns to appreciate the Russian reverence for ballet and the discipline which that country expects from even its youngest dancers. Lizinka, on the other hand, learns to "let her hair down" and experience the joy of dancing as well as the hard work.

Hovering over the two girls is the benevolent presence of Miss Jan, their ballet teacher. Miss Jan teaches ballet in a small Connecticut town and each year for their recital stages a full-scale dramatic production. Sue Farrar's friends and former students will recognize this scenario, since for twenty years, until her retirement last spring, Sue directed her own ballet studio, the Children's Dance Theatre in Bethel and South Paris. Like her character Miss Jan, she specialized in yearly productions that qualified as community events rather than mere recitals.

In this case, real life contains more flare than the fictional events, for while the dance teacher in *Samantha On Stage* uses non-original material, Sue Farrar created and choreographed her own productions using the bare story line from children's fantasies such as Mary Poppins and Peter Pan. She became well known locally for her original taped scores and her elaborate scenes and sets.

As a child, Sue wrote poetry and often longed "to be another Longfellow." But, until recently, ballet absorbed all her energies and she did not write *Samantha On Stage* until the year before her retirement from the Children's Dance Theatre. Even then, she wrote for her own self-expression and had no thought of publication until she read an advertisement in the Norway *Advertiser-Democrat* soliciting manuscripts.

Encouraged, she sent the first draft of her novel to the Oxford Hills Publishing Co. and was pleasantly surprised when Editor and Pulitzer Prize-author Howard James told her that he liked the book. Eventually, after further work on the manuscript, James suggested that the novel merited national publication, and he personally recommended the book to associates at Dial Press in New York. The Dial editors accepted the manuscript enthusiastically—no small compliment to the book's quality. Sue was thrilled.

She is quick to point out that, despite the ballet studio focus of *Samantha On Stage*, the story is entirely fictional and none of the major characters is based on a real person. All of the young girls, for example, are a composite of Sue's students rather than particular ones, and even Miss Jan has characteristics of her own. Familiar names and events do creep in—although the girls in Samantha's ballet class are fictional characters, they are named after Sue's last Bethel teen class. Samantha's friends Lisa and Michelle are named after Sue's daughters. Aunt Em is the only character unabashedly modelled from real life—Sue's sister Emily Saunders also makes heavenly cookies and is a favorite among the children.

Although the story must take place in a Connecticut town near New York City to allow for the presence of a Russian diplomatic family, the setting could otherwise be a small town in western Maine. Finally, Miss Jan's account of her trip to the Soviet Union and to the Bolshoi Ballet class is

taken entirely from Sue's experiences. Two summers ago she and her sister Emily spent three weeks in Russia, and from that visit came much of the material and the insight that give depth and authenticity to the portrayal of Lizinka in the book.

Sue's Lithuanian family background has also given her a lifelong interest in Russian culture and led her to write down a compilation of children's Folk Tales from Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and Poland. She was prompted to do this by the disintegration of these ethnic traditions. "In the Soviet Union," she says, "everything is being 'Russianized.' People are losing their ethnic cultures and that is sad."

Although relishing her new-found success as an author, Sue remains dedicated to the art and discipline to which she

devoted forty years as ballet teacher-choreographer. Her career began while she was still a student at Mexico High School. In her freshman year she started her first ballet class in an improvised studio in her family's dining room. Continuing her classes in Rumford after graduation, she would doubtless have remained there had it not been for a tragedy that changed the course of her life.

Not long after graduation from Mexico High School, a group of Sue's friends and associates went on an outing to Portland, where they planned a pleasant Sunday cruise on the boat *Don*. Sue stayed behind in Rumford, to be stunned the next morning when the terrible news came from Portland. The *Don* had sunk, and all passengers were lost—including Sue's closest friends. That

day 34 Rumford residents died in the disaster, and Sue's life was shattered. She knew that she could not remain in Rumford.

Sue spent the next eight years working and studying ballet in Boston and New York. Among her teachers was the Russian ballerina Madame Butsova, who was understudy for the great ballerina Anna Pavlova. While living in New York she married her husband Charles.

After living for two years in Charles' native Winchester, Massachusetts, the Farrars moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where they lived for twelve years and where their four children were born. All during this period, before moving to Bethel in 1959, Sue taught ballet and developed the Children's Dance Theatre.

*The illustrations on this and the preceding page were done by Connecticut artist Ruth Sanderson for Sue Farrar's book, Samantha On Stage*





*Sue Farrar and students at the Bethel dance studio: (l to r) Sue Fraser, Penny Kimball, Tammy Bean, Susan Gould, Theresa Wilbur, Lori Boyce*

It was a long, hard climb before the Children's Dance Theatre found a home of its own. Sue taught "up and down the street, everywhere in Bethel" until, in 1971, she was able to move into a new studio at the front of a furniture store building next to Martha's Restaurant by the railroad tracks. Sue had moved all of her tapes and equipment into the studio before the opening. But the night before her first class in the new studio, the building burned to the ground and she lost everything.

Sue remembers with deep appreciation the many kindnesses of townspeople who sent money and equipment and offered the use of a living room in the Doug Banes home as a studio for the remainder of the season. She was able to start teaching the very next week.

It was only after thirteen years in Bethel that she finally was able to buy the "old bowling alley" on Main Street that became the permanent home of the Children's Dance Theatre.

When Sue Farrar retired last spring after seven years in her own studio, she was teaching 200 students from Bethel and South Paris. Of her many accomplishments,

she takes the most pride in the fact that she inspired enthusiasm in her students and taught them something about theatre and character building as well as ballet. She is also proud that her own children took an interest in ballet and classical music, and in their mother's work.

Sue's daughter, Michelle Farrar Keyes, carries on the tradition, having taken over the Children's Dance Theatre when her mother retired. "It was really my dream that she do this," Sue smiles. "It was time for me to turn to other things."

Now a published author, Sue Farrar is following up on her first achievement. In addition to *Samantha On Stage* and the Folk Tales, she is working on a Dance Diary, in the form of an illustrated album for ballet students. Already she has completed a sequel to the first Samantha book.

As ballet teacher and choreographer, Sue built her first successful career through enthusiasm and dedication tempered by hard work. With the same finesse, she now lifts the curtain on her career as author.

□

*Clay is a free-lance writer now living in Portland.*

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Photo by Tom Stockwell

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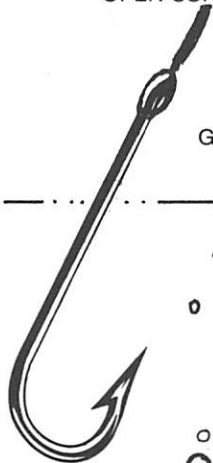
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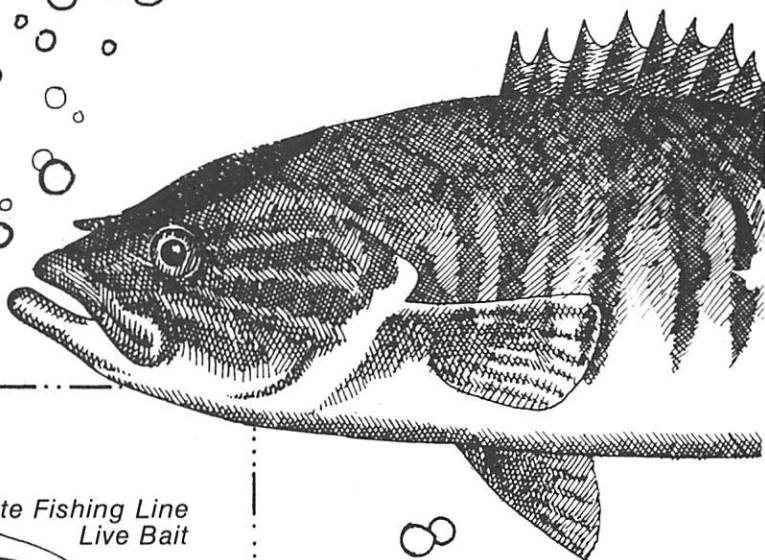


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## Rural Housing Institute: Teaching Self-Help Technology

by Nancy Marcotte

The Rural Housing Institute (RHI), a Community Action Program (CAP), sponsored by Oxford County Community Service (OCCS), is a small group of people currently funded by the Department of Energy (DOE) and Community Services Administration (CSA).

Determined not to be overwhelmed by all their bureaucratic initials, these ordinary folks are busy in Market Square, South Paris, establishing the foundation of a self-help program for low income people in Oxford County.

The cluttered second-floor Rural Housing Institute office has been fashioned from a former auditorium, stage and dressing room at the old Association Hall. The space is shared with two companion projects: Home Repair and Weatherization. It is a jumble of half-finished walls, lumber, insulation, desks, files, tackboards full of interesting bulletins and bookshelves loaded with helpful books—some of which can be borrowed from the office.

Greg Schulz, RHI Director, has been leading an intensive drive to provide an impetus for rural development, in the belief that most government money never actually gets to the poor. He has been helping people to become more self-reliant by setting up tool and book-lending programs, workshops, and training for people who want to—or, more accurately, *have to*—rehabilitate their living situations.

Schulz sees his program as more than boards, hammers, and carpentry skills; it's a helping hand, an opportunity for people to take control of and improve their own lives.

"In some cases, they're changing the patterns of generations. They're getting the kids out of the tarpaper shacks," Schulz says with enthusiasm. "It's a combination of tools for self-sufficiency—a pile of barn boards from a barn that no one else would take down, studs and nails which we have wheel-and-dealed for, a hammer, and perhaps more technologically advanced things, like a solar collector or a composting toilet."

All over the country, similar groups of people are striving to follow the philosophical outlines of economist E. F. Schumacher's book, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*. Schumacher preaches that "low" or "intermediate" technology is "vastly superior to the primitive technology of by-gone ages," yet at the same time, much simpler and cheaper than the advanced technology of today. He calls it self-help technology—one to which everyone can gain admittance, regardless of their wealth or influence.

Terry Hodges has been designated Appropriate Technologist in the local Rural Housing Office. According to Hodges (who is now a free-lance consultant), *appropriate technology* means doing things the simplest

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## A LAYMAN'S LOOK AT CORDWOOD CONSTRUCTION

From a distance it looks like wall after wall of fieldstone and mortar, very pretty in the morning sun. From a little closer it looks like nothing other than what it is—circles of wood encased in crude cement, an occasional window frame poking up above the waist-high walls.

What am I doing here, I ask myself. Am I crazy? I am hardly a carpenter or a mason. Yet here I am, along with several other people, about to help finishing a cordwood building. The materials are already here and are not particularly intimidating: a cement mixer, a heap of sand, a pile of wood cut into 12" lengths, some bags of mortar, a tank-truck full of water, scaffolding, shovels, pails, rubber gloves.

Rubber gloves? We are told that, in order to preserve the wood in these walls, extra lime has been added to the mortar mix. Since lime can be painfully caustic to the skin, rubber gloves are a must. O.K. I put them on.

Next, the cordwood must be moved a little closer to the building. That part is easy. I've hauled wood before...even chopped it.

Then, the first batch of mortar must be mixed. Buckets of the wet stuff are taken to the wall, where crews slop it on between the logs already laid. Round or split logs are fit into place carefully, but not too slowly, linked like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to make the best-looking wall possible in the short time available before the mortar starts to set. The 12" pieces are laid horizontally, at right angles to the wall plane, giving the building foot-wide walls that are irregular, but solid.

Soon there is a constant demand for mortar from several crews and I find that mixing it is a lot like mixing bread or cookie dough—the secret is in the "feel." I throw the stuff together, adding a cup of water, six more shovels full of sand, a *soupçon* of mortar and *voilà*—perfect "dough." I get so good at it

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way, using the least amount of money possible, consuming the lowest amount of (renewable) energy resources, and working on a local level, with available resources and people. This is in direct contrast to the centralized, high-technology way of doing things which typified much of the country's problem-solving until the beginning of this decade.

A graduate of the University of Maine at Farmington where he studied solar applications, Hodges worked on uses of a Schumacher-type philosophy at RHI for the past year. During that time he and Schulz established a comprehensive clearing-house of helpful information that they feel is *appropriate* for solving a few Maine problems.

With an attempt to foster individual participation in its projects, the Institute has sponsored workshops on topics such as solar collection principles, housing humidity control, ventilating techniques, owner-built sewage treatment alternatives, and energy self-sufficiency. Everyone has been welcome at these workshops and many have come to learn.

In addition to the workshops, Hodges arranged alternative energy exhibits to celebrate Sun Day locally last May. He was one of the leaders in a joint venture with Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association and Community Action Program (CAP) Housing to build at Litchfield Fair Grounds last fall a distinctive, simple and inexpensive cordwood building, and has been trying to organize individuals working on their own types of alternative energy projects—such as wind generators and passive solar systems.

Most recently, Hodges has developed a new composting toilet in response to the state's desire to improve rural sewage treatment conditions. The relatively inexpensive toilet, which requires a small leach bed but no cellar, has been approved by the Maine Department of Human Services, and a model will be built when the ground thaws this spring. Following a monitoring period, the toilet prototype may be granted a state approval similar to the one presently given to commercially-manufactured composting toilets, which *are* expensive and *do* require a full cellar. This type of ecologically-sound solution to rural problems could soon be at work in Oxford County.

There are other, older programs at OCCS which focus more on conservation in rural housing than does Hodges. Home Repair, headed by Stan Smith, and Weatherization, with Charlie Allen in charge, are projects which were set up with several goals—to improve the economy of the area (by training skilled laborers and setting up cottage industries), to give a service to disadvantaged (especially elderly) people living in homes which are in sad and dangerous states of delapidation, and to train leaders and carpenters. The weatherization project has been the most conserving of all programs, helping to cut heat losses in many homes by tightening them up against Maine weather.

All three programs are helping people who apply and qualify; but, while buttoning up is a step in the right direction, appropriate technology goes a little further. People with little money may have tighter homes, but if they are consuming the high-technology resources of electricity and fossil fuels, they may still be caught in a crunch between high prices and low availability. With appropriate technology, RHI hopes to alleviate these problems by exploring the means of heating with wood and harnessing the wind, water, and sun. It is concerned with developing local sources for all our needs—power, heat, food—energy systems most suitable for the cultural, physical and social conditions of the area where we live.

The Rural Housing people believe small is better—that small groups can work within their familiar environment in the best way to improve the quality of life without merely increasing the quantity of their material possessions, a traditional Maine concern. While not advocating a step backward to candles and open fireplaces, it still echoes the basic co-operative principle of community home-rule which has kept rural America rolling since the country's beginnings.

It is not easy to produce a generation of Americans who are willing to sacrifice some degree of luxury and comfort for the good of the future earth. It would be all-too-easy to have too many books, too many theories, an over-abundance of seminars and workshops, and still never begin to alter the over-energized, over-consuming, poverty-stricken society.

# ~//~ *Maine Is Forever* ~//~

by Inez Farrington

**A seasonal account of rural life  
during the first fifty years of this century (Part Five)**

May receives a hearty welcome from Maine people and in return she offers her very best, which is very good indeed. It is the first month when we can be sure warm weather is here to stay; the month of plans and hopes for the summer that lies ahead. It is really summer weather and we know that there are many more days of it—days of bright skies and flowers and days filled with music, for all the birds arrive in May—busy, happy, and with home-building plans of their own.

May finishes up house cleaning for all good Maine housewives. Every last year's dead fly has been swept up, the hornets driven out of the open chamber, the upstairs windows washed on the outside, and the entire house is clean and shining. Strangers coming to visit would say that there was nothing to do but sit down and enjoy a thoroughly clean house all summer, but this is far from the truth. Maine housekeepers know that their busiest days are ahead of them, and that the house will soon be needing cleaning again.

May is planting time and the ladies do not hesitate to go out and work in the garden with their husbands. They are never too busy to take time out to plant their own gardens—the climbing sweet peas, the nasturtiums that flower so plentifully, the showy phlox and gaudy late asters. No farmhouse is too poor to have its flower garden and no home too isolated from main roads.

May brings us our first flower, the trailing arbutus, never called anything but a Mayflower in Maine. These tiny pink and white flowers grow close to the ground and it is a poor nature lover indeed who does not go in search of the first ones to appear. They have a fragrance that is never forgotten and a few in a water glass will send a heavenly perfume through a room. No state law protects them, but everyone is careful not to destroy the roots, as this flower is not as common in Maine as it once was. Anyone who has ever buried his face in a bunch of these truly Maine flowers will never forget them. They have a fragrance of spring, of



glad days to come, and of nearly forgotten memories. Memories of how we once put these flowers in Maybaskets and hung them to the boy or girl next door on a moonlight night; of the kiss when caught. (Maybe you hooked your chin over the clothes line and fell with a crash, as I did one dark night when I was so deeply in love, at eleven, with the handsome twelve-year-old neighbor boy.) May is a memory month for all who have known it in Maine. Memories of how happy you were when you saw the first robin; of the wishes you made on the first bluebird, some of which may have come true and no longer seem important, some that never did, and you are glad. Memories of new puppies, the old swimming hole, and the big trout that got away last year and is still there waiting for you this year. It may be miles between you and the first Mayflower, but memories bring you back to Maine each year in the month of May.

Another Maine flower that blooms at this time is one that, as far as anyone can see, has no use and gives no pleasure, except to be added to the school children's list of flowers. This is the trillium or, as Maine people call it, "Stinking Benjamin"—a true name, for it really smells. It grows in abundance since no one uses it for bouquets, and like a skunk it furnishes its own protection.

Lilacs bloom in Maine during May if the season is an advanced one, but they often disappoint us. We plan on them for decoration on Memorial Day and each lilac bush is watched anxiously through May.

They are common in other states, but I wonder how many out-of-state folks have ever heard them called "li-locks" as my aged grandfather did? This was not because he pronounced the word wrong, but because everyone of his time called them the same. We visited Grandfather every afternoon when we were small, not because it was a duty but because it was fun and something to look forward to. Because of poor health, Grandad was retired from hard work, but he cared for his own garden, berry patch, and apple orchard. He welcomed his noisy granddaughters with stories and apples, and if we had behaved quite well, he would let us pick a few gooseberries from the only gooseberry bush in town, which was his special pet. In May the willow trees in the yard would start new leaves, which by some process unknown to us shed small yellow curls that we spent hours fashioning into curls for our dolls, or pushed around with sticks, pretending they were live caterpillars. Some afternoons when it was time for us to go home, Grandad would say, "Would you girls like a few li-locks from the bush at the corner of the house?" We knew then that we had found special favor with Gramp, for the corner li-lock bush was the pride of his heart.

It is always amazing to us to discover someone who has never heard of hanging Maybaskets, but even in our neighbor state of Massachusetts the practice is almost unknown. A Maybasket in Maine is as well known as a pine tree, and I have no idea how far back the idea originated. I only know my parents and grandparents hung Maybaskets, just as did the ancestors of everyone in Maine. It is a pastime for only the young people and one much looked forward to. Small boys and girls donate what small change they have and the lump sum is used on candy, which is put in a prettily decorated box or Maybasket. A victim is selected to "hang" it to, which simply means that while the crowd hides, one swift runner puts the box on the porch or front step, knocks hard with a stick of wood, and yells loudly, "Maybasket!" The lucky girl or boy is then supposed to run after the crowd, catch them separately, and reward them with a kiss. It isn't easy to catch a crowd of ten or fifteen fast-running youngsters who know each rock to dodge and each hole to avoid. After everyone is caught, the crowd is invited into the house where waiting mothers have prepared a lunch to be enjoyed, with the contents of the Maybasket for dessert.

The older boys and girls use Maybasket season as an excuse for old-fashioned courting and the chance to kiss the boy or girl of their choice. Maine people suspect, however, that sometimes the one who is caught is kissed more than the regulation count of once. Strange as it may seem to out-of-state folks, the making of Maybaskets is a profitable home industry. They are sold in stores, ranging in prices from fifteen cents for small ones to fifty cents for the large ones. A pasteboard box, covered with colored crepe paper, trimmed with ribbon and paper roses, and filled with a box of chocolates, proves to a girl that a fellow is really getting serious.

The season is often a worrisome one for mothers as they sit and wonder why daughters do not come in. They are sure they never stayed out so late hanging Maybaskets, and they worry for fear the small children will get cut on barbed wire while running through the dark. But parents never forbid the pleasure of Maybasking. It is a native Maine custom and while strangers may smile at it, it is one of the customs that I am sure will go on as long as Maine does.

May is a month of birds and song, and while the call of the whip-poor-will is not exactly a song it is a well-loved sound. The whip-poor-will is a bird that was once common to other states, but nowhere so common as in Maine. For some reason they are disappearing from this state, whether from some disease or because of street





lights, traffic, and noise in rural districts, it is not known; and now you are lucky to hear the demanding call to "whip poor will." When we were girls in our isolated village, we could often watch through the window and see one on the front step and watch it as it sang. This little bird can keep a person awake for hours with the constant repetition of its name. As it goes on and on the wakeful person will start counting the calls, and often there are as many as two hundred. This is inclined to make the listener glad that whip-poor-wills are not as common as they once were! Through past years I have always written in my diary, "heard the first whip-poor-will," but I find it missing of late years. About the only place now where the mournful song is heard every night is at camps in the thick woods or in a far-distant field.

Aside from making Maybaskets, another industry very common in Maine, among the ladies, is that of cleaning summer camps. There are hundreds of them in Maine that must be put in order before the arrival of the owners. And to the housewife what easier way of earning extra money can there be? It is such a well-known way of earning cash in this state that newspapers carry ads by women who are looking for this kind of work. It is a job that nearly every woman tries at one time, some for the novelty of it, but the majority for needed money. Living near a colony of summer camps as we do, it really pays off well, for the camps must be cleaned and we earn our living from the summer guests.

From long experience we can go into these summer homes and know exactly where things are kept and how the owner wishes things done. It would not be easy for a clerk in a store, a teacher or a secretary; but to Maine women who keep house day after day, it is routine. Also, it is a welcome change from our housework and we enjoy it. It is fun to pack a lunch and eat our dinner in front of the fireplace when the welcome noon hour comes. It is a great satisfaction to clean a house that is really dirty, and a camp that has been closed all winter is dirty. Leaves have blown in where it seems impossible for such a tiny thing to get through. Mice have played hide and seek through all the dishes and have made their beds in the most unexpected places. Anyone who has a mortal fear of a mouse should never advertise for a job to

clean camps; they have a way of jumping from places when you least expect them. The only safe thing to do is to keep a broom handy at all times, in order to slay the enemy.

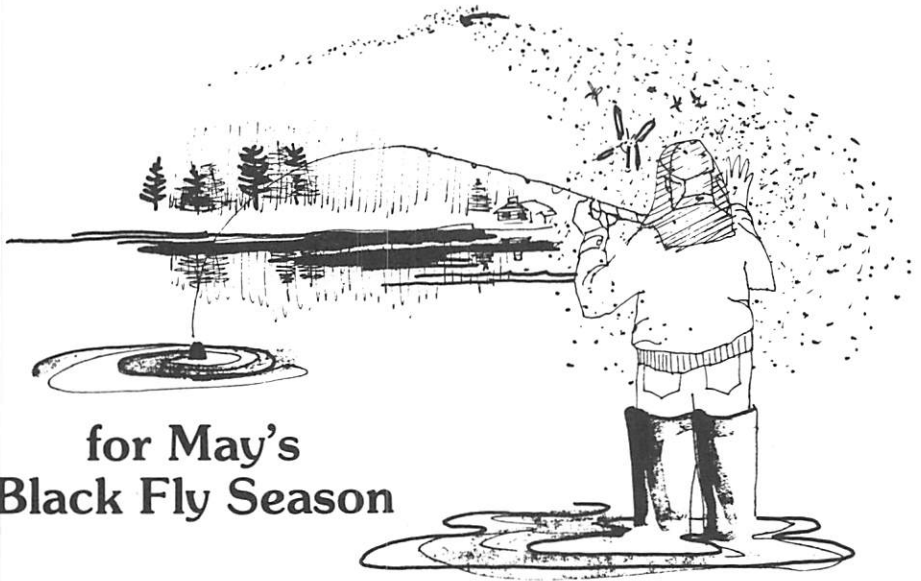
When you have the house spotless, you always wonder what places you have overlooked or forgotten, for it is not easy to remember every dirty place in a strange your own. Mother and I still remember the day when we were about to leave a camp which we thought was immaculate. We could see no reason why the owners could not move in and get supper with no worry. The thought of supper led Mother to open the oven door and there, ready to bake with the roast, was a dead bird that had come down the chimney during the winter. How thankful we were that we had thought to look there, and anyone for whom we clean camps now can be sure that the oven is ready for use!

May not only brings the labor of camp cleaning but it also brings one that pays off in pleasure and satisfaction, if not in money. It might be classed as a sport instead of a labor, because digging for dandelion greens is as illusive as deer hunting or fishing. Dandelions are an old-time New England food and are well worth the trouble of getting them. They are cultivated in gardens, but every woman in Maine digs her own from the front lawn or yard. Later in the year they are an eyesore on lawns and a pest for they multiply so rapidly that they can soon ruin a lawn, but the first ones are watched carefully and when they are the right size it is time to get a knife and pan and go out and get one of the finest foods that Maine offers.

Dandelions must be taken up by the roots with a dull knife, never a sharp one or they will be cut to shreds. It is a back-breaking task; but who thinks of that, out in the warm spring sunshine for the first time, when robins are singing, "Kill him, cure him, give him physic," and you are going to have your first fresh vegetable for supper?

Dandelions must first be brought to the boiling point in order to remove some of the bitter taste. They are then drained and put into fresh water with a piece of salt pork, and your supper that night is a real treat. The next day you ache in all your muscles, your finger nails cannot be gotten clean, and your fingers have a stain that will not come off;

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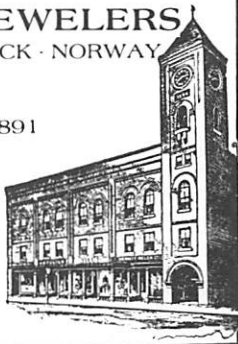


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# Heading Out

## Hiking The Bridgton and Harrison

*by Ronald Albury*

Eat your hearts out, narrow gauge fans. I, too, am a two-foot gauge rail enthusiast who for nearly twenty years has owned a summer cottage in Harrison.

It's a great area for a vacation. If you were to spend a week in this beautiful lakes region of Maine, you could trace the entire line of the Bridgton and Saco River (Bridgton and Harrison) Railroad from Harrison in the north to Bridgton Junction in the south—a distance of 21½ miles. Large portions of the roadbed have been kept open as snowmobile trails, ideal for hiking. Since some inaccessible portions can only be followed by paralleling highways and another part has been utilized as a roadway which can accommodate vehicular traffic, the actual distances to be hiked on foot total only about ten or twelve miles (unfortunately these figures will have to be doubled as you will have to walk back to your car). The hiking can easily be divided into five morning jaunts which will allow plenty of time for an afternoon of swimming back at the lake.

On the *first day* you can cover about 7½ miles, from Harrison to Sandy River. The 5½ miles from Harrison to Bridgton is the most difficult part of the line to find, so it can best be done by car. As you leave Harrison southbound on Route 117 and make the wide curve out of the village, you see first a succession of footbridges which have been built on the abutment foundations of the B & H mainline. For most of the distance on the Harrison branch, the trackage ran along the edge of Long Lake. Since much of the waterfront property has now been utilized by vacationer's cottages, a good deal of the roadbed has become a part of someone's front lawn or beach. Even if it were still discernable, it could only be approached by a private driveway. And so you must be satisfied with viewing the occasional bridges which span the inlets of Long Lake and can be easily seen from the highway. Route 117

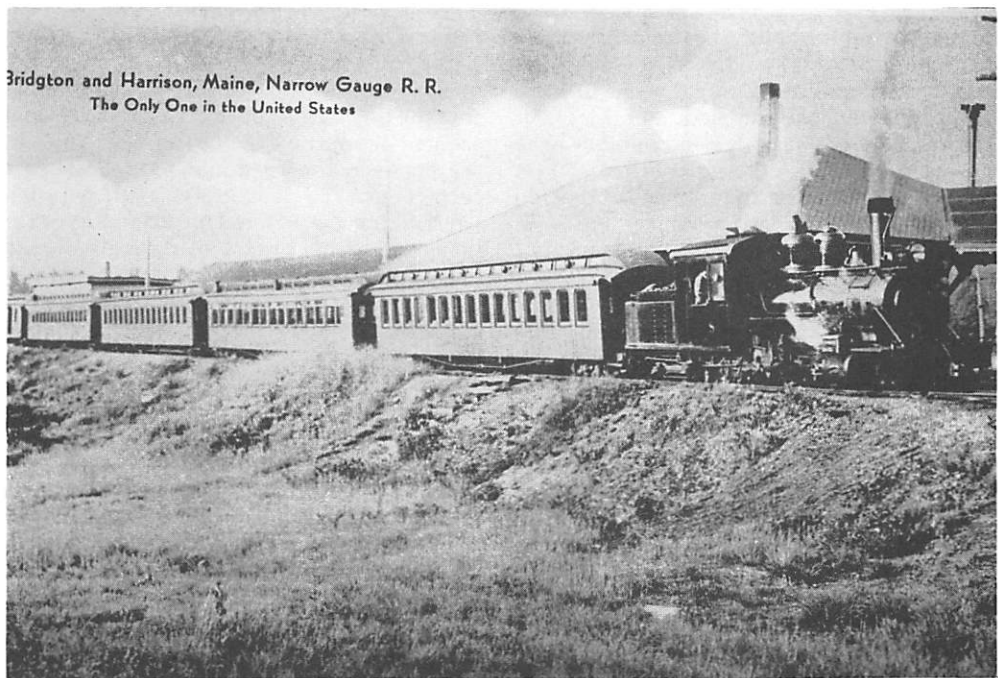
was modernized a few years ago and had some of its kinks straightened out. To best see the bridges, you should take the old road whenever possible. It swings off to the left, follows closer to the shoreline and loops back now and then to touch base with its smoother, wider, and more direct replacement.

At North Bridgton, one of the few (if not the only) remaining station structures may be seen. On your left just before the beach is a small doghouse-type building with a peaked roof which bears a sign denoting this as the site of the North Bridgton station built in 1898. To the left of this historical marker is a small squarish cottage with a porch overlooking the lake. Before the porch was added, this was the B & H freight house. The passenger station, also converted to a summer cottage, was sold last year by its latter-day owner, Bridgton Academy, and removed.

Continuing on the four miles into Bridgton, Route 117 meets Route 302. If you turn left sharply at this intersection, and go on Main Street alongside the Federal Market, you will come to the only remaining steel bridge, on Mill Street. It is behind the market on the right, and crosses the Stevens Brook. Looking back across the road, you can see a few hundred feet of the approaching roadbed coming in from Harrison. Shortly after crossing this bridge, the Harrison Branch curved to the right across Route 302 near the present First National market, and met the mainline just before the Bridgton yards. The yard area is now occupied by a new high school, although the grandstand of adjacent Skillin Field may be seen in the background of some of the old steam locomotive portraits.

The mainline coming out of the yards paralleled Route 302 going toward Portland. You can find traces of it in front of the Sebago Moc factory and at several other

Bridgton and Harrison, Maine, Narrow Gauge R. R.  
The Only One in the United States



*The Bridgton and Harrison, Maine Railway was a two-foot gauge road which began running on January 20, 1883 and was the only one in the country still running and carrying freight until the 1940's*

places to the right of the highway. If you pull into the parking lot of Bob Gerry's Chevrolet, you can see what may be a maintenance-of-way shack on the right about 100 feet from the highway. Just past the Chevrolet agency, the roadbed moves away from the highway and can be followed on foot across the edge of the meadow until a high stone bridge abutment is reached. Since there is no longer a bridge across the stream (Willett Brook), you must retrace your steps, return to your car, and continue along Route 302, making the next right turn. After a short distance, if you look carefully, you can see where the line came out of the woods on the left and went into the woods on the right. You can walk to the right until you reach the opposite side of the aforementioned bridge abutment. Returning to the roadway, you get back into your car because the line to the left is quickly lost in a large dump. You drive a short distance to the intersection of Route 117 and make a very sharp left turn onto a Route 117 bypass that loops into the village of Sandy Creek. In the village you turn left on Route 107, and a few hundred feet from the corner (before coming to the mill pond) you see that

the roadbed crossed the highway. On your left is the site of the Sandy Creek station, now little more than a flat clearing. With some difficulty, you can hike the mainline back as far as the dump. A high fill characterized this section of the trackage.

We found the *second day's hike* to be the longest. It seemed best to begin at Ingall's Road and work backward to Sandy Creek. Drive out of Sandy Creek on Route 117. 2.1 miles after passing Wood's Pond on the right, you will see the Goodwin and Walker Cemeteries, also on the right. At the next curve, Ingall's Road goes off to the left. This is a gravel road and not recommended for low-slung cars. Our mid-sized station wagon was able to make it by proceeding very slowly. Keep to the left at the fork, and a short distance farther you will find a slight clearing and be able to discern the mainline to the left and to the right. We walked to the left back to Route 107 at Sandy Creek. This is a pleasant stroll along a pine-needle-padded path through the deepest of woods. The clearings for several sidings can be seen. A deep cut is encountered and three small bridges are crossed before you reach Sandy creek. The route is interesting and it is hard



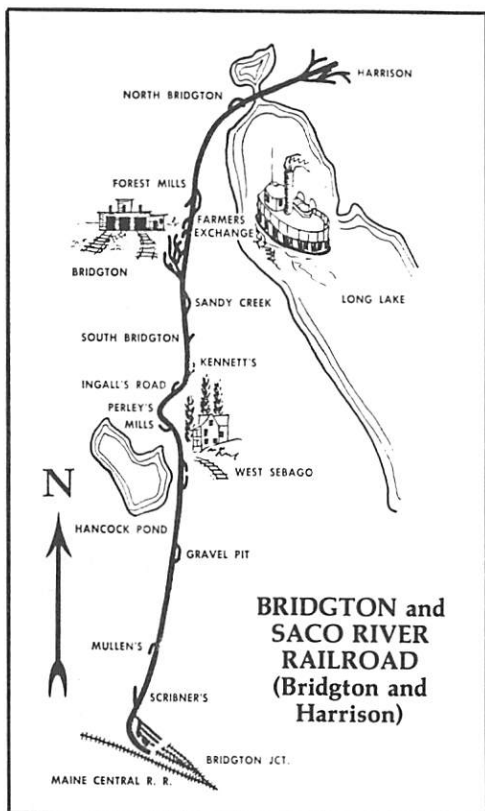
to realize that it is four miles long. About 2½ to 3 hours must be allowed to make the round trip back to Sandy Creek. On the night following the completion of this leg of the journey, you'll surely sleep well! We have now accounted for the northernmost 11½ miles of the Bridgton and Harrison. Only ten miles, or less than half, remain.

On the *third day*, you return on Route 117 to Ingalls Road and proceed carefully once again to the mainline. This time you turn right and drive very slowly along the right-of-way. Soft branches brush the side of the car as you traverse the one mile to Perley's Mill, a small clearing on the corner of a lake. You leave the car here and continue on foot over the mainline which forks off to the left from the roadway. After proceeding a short distance, you find that a sand-digging operation has cut the roadbed in two and you have to backtrack a bit and go to the right to get around the deep pit. You rejoin the B & H again on the other side and continue with less difficulty. About a mile farther you come to a blacktop road. On the right before crossing the road is some debris which may have been the West Sebago station. Less than 100 feet to the right you can see the intersection with Sebago Road, but you cross the street and re-enter the woods. Here a bit of care must be taken as there are two trails. The railroad is just to the left of a big rock. The small trees of this wooded area meet over the roadbed, creating an interesting "tunnel effect." As you angle to the right and near a meeting with Sebago Road, the route gets a bit hard to follow. After reaching the road, which runs along the side of Hancock Pond, it is a good time to retrace your steps and return to your vehicle at Perley's Mill. Once back in the car, continue on the gravel roadway, keeping to your right and very shortly you will come out on Sebago Road. Turning right, proceed about three miles to Route 117 where you turn right again and head for home. You have covered about three miles today—only about seven more to go!

On the *fourth day*, you return to Sebago Road via Route 117 and nine-tenths-of-a-mile past the Perley's Mill driveway you pass the intersection near West Sebago station. Continuing straight along Hancock Pond, watch to see where the narrow gauge crossed the road. The changes that have taken place over the years make this task

rather difficult and the clues are rather vague. It probably was just past the mailboxes marked "Coffin" and "Collins" that the tiny trains glided across the road and scooted along the edge of the lake. You can see between the road and the lakeshore a cottage marked "Pickering" with a porch overlooking the water. This lodge appears in many of the old photos of the railroad and just north of it was the spring-fed Hancock water tank. Toward the end of this cluster of cottages, as the Hancock Pond shoreline curves away from the road, you will see a snowmobile ramp going up into the woods. This will meet with the mainline as it goes to the right. On the left side of the road you will notice a garage with a B & H "Railroad Crossing" sign over the doors. Continue on the blacktop to the West Shore Road (which is one mile from the Pickering Cottage). Turn right onto this gravel artery and, after travelling six-tenths of a mile, you will see a lesser road coming up from the right to join us. This is the narrow gauge which has travelled four-tenths of a mile from the aforementioned snowmobile ramp.

For the next 2.2 miles you can drive the roadbed. Through "the Notch" (600 feet above sea level), keeping to the left as the main part of the road follows the lakeshore, and then continuing 1.7 miles—passing the gravel pit where crews obtained ballast for repairs after washouts—you finally come to a bridge which cannot be crossed by a car. This, I believe, was near Twin Lakes Station and Barker Pond may be seen to the left. You can cross the bridge on foot and hike a long mile to Mullin's Siding and then another half-mile to Rankin's Mill. "The Summit" at Mullin's Siding, where north and southbound trains passed, is 500 feet above sea level and 150 feet above the junction with the Maine Central. You will descend the remaining 2½ miles to the junction interchange on a 2.5 percent grade. Rankin's Mill is just short of an intersection with a blacktop road. The ruins of the mill, built in 1871, may be seen to the left along the stream. As you retrace your steps to the car, just past the cottages on Barker Pond keep a sharp eye to the ground. It was in this section that we found a number of narrow gauge spikes, interesting souvenirs of a pleasant day. Tomorrow you will only have about two miles to go—from Rankin's Mill to the



interchange with the Maine Central at Bridgton Junction.

On the *fifth and final day* of your project, you once again drive down Route 117 from Bridgton. Turning left again on Sebago Road (6.4 miles from the Bridgton Civil War Monument on Route 302), you pass the now-familiar Perley's Mill, West Sebago, and Hancock Pond. This time stay on Sebago Road past West Shore Road and drive several miles to Route 107 (which had left Route 117 at Sandy Creek). Turning right on 107, take the next blacktop road to the right which goes toward Hiram. After a few miles you will pass through the hamlet of Convene and reach the Hiram town line. From then on keep a lookout for a mailbox marked "Peabody" on the right. This is Rankin's Mill where yesterday's hike ended and where the narrow gauge crossed the road. Just ahead is an intersection with a sign: "For Sale Honey." Beyond the intersection, turn the car around, park on the shoulder, and head down the hill into the woods. With some difficulty the railroad grade can be ascertained, parallel to the road and

alongside a stream. At one point you will nearly lose the course, but realizing that the grade would be too steep for a Lilliput locomotive, look to the right and see that the tracks were apparently laid through a low cut. As the line skirts a farmer's pasture on the edge of the woods, you will be startled to look up and see a pair of cows lazily staring at the intruders into this sylvan realm.

After hiking about a mile, you come to one of the highlights of the expedition, a fitting climax for this last day. We had heard about it from several locals, but only once had seen it mentioned in any of the related literature. Here, deep in the Maine woods, is a beautiful stonemasonry arch bridge over Hancock Brook. If I hadn't been looking for it, we might have missed it.

As we walked across a dirt fill I said to my wife and hiking companion, "There's water down the bank on the left."

She responded, "There's water on the right, too."

As I quickly concluded, "Then there must be a way that the waters are joined," I looked down and saw the protruding abutments of the dirt-covered bridge on which we were walking. It was quite a trick to get down and far enough away to behold the little masterpiece in all its splendor, but about fifteen minutes and several wet feet later I had clicked my shutter a number of times and was ready to continue the journey.

A hundred yards farther we had one of our infrequent encounters with humanity. A woodsman on a bulldozer was noisily dragging huge logs on a rough trail to a clearing where a trucker, seated atop his vehicle, was maneuvering a giant claw which loaded them onto the truck. In the distance we could hear the monotonous tune of a chain saw which was felling the giant tree trunks. After skirting this operation, we continued a few hundred yards to find a large abandoned sawmill with a driveway leading to the road. We decided to retrace our steps to our car.

After turning the car around, we headed back to the sawmill driveway and into the complex. We turned right and drove through a quarry area. Keeping to the left and on the most travelled part of the gravelled area, we exited near an embankment which hinted of the narrow gauge. After a short distance we came to a blacktop road with the Saco River just beyond. We turned left, and as the river separated from the road it made room for a

meadow on the right, covered with low growth. This was the Bridgton Junction yard. With a bit of imagination, we could see where the trains came down across the road and into the yards. It is very difficult walking in the yards today. You can see how quickly things return to nature as you struggle through the dense growth, looking for any signs that man could have been there before. I recalled old photos in books about the railroad which showed the hustle and bustle of the busy interchange just four decades ago.

An easier way into the yards, which involves a longer walk, is to drive past the area to the spot where the Maine Central tracks come near to the road, pull in to the right, park, and walk the ties along the marshy pond. Just before reaching the big steel bridge over the Saco River, careful scrutiny will reveal the gradually disappearing grades which carried rails into the transfer area where freight was unloaded from cars of one gauge and loaded on cars of another. Rummaging about among the trees and undergrowth, you may find the remains of the B & H Chevrolet sedan self-propelled railcar (the line's answer to depression conditions) or the bolts and timbers of the hand-operated turntable. If you choose this route to the yards, be careful! Maine Central trains, although infrequent, can be hazardous to your continuing health and well-being.

For a rail enthusiast or a lover of the great outdoors, the five mornings in Vacationland have been well spent and were very satisfying. We had become deep friends with an old acquaintance, the 21½-mile Bridgton and Harrison Railroad. We had encountered deep cuts, long graded fills, and about a dozen bridges (not counting the ones along Long Lake from Bridgton to Harrison). In my mind's eye I had seen chortling little steam locomotives bustling through the deep woods of Maine Vacationland. We heartily recommend this opportunity to retrace one path of our rich historical heritage.

Several tips might be offered to make your quest more enjoyable. Be prepared for woodland temperature changes—wear summer clothes but bring a light jacket or sweater with you in case it gets cooler. At certain times of the year insects can be pesky in the Maine woods—have some bug spray available. Since most of your photos will be taken in shaded areas, use a sensitive film such as Tri-X or Hi-Speed Ektachrome. Some candy bars for quick energy and a small thermos jug for refreshment might be welcome additions—but don't carry too much excess baggage. It goes without saying that, even though the route is easily accessible from the roads and it can be broken up into nice hikes, there is much walking to do and comfortable shoes should be worn.



Be prepared to indulge in some detective work. When you lose sight of the roadbed, look for an uncreosoted tie with the spike holes just two feet apart. Or search for a fallen and rotted telegraph pole which may indicate the tiny railroad's route. Or perhaps you might find a hint of the sandy roadbed. It may be that your clue to which path to follow at a fork could be which course was the straightest, or the most level, or had the most characteristically "railroad" cuts or fills. The way is not always clearly defined, but the clues are usually there for us to find.

It is ironic that steam-oriented railfans, who normally have an aversion to the internal combustion engine, must thank the gasoline motor for keeping this historic roadbed open. If it were not for snowmobiles, heavy logging equipment, and trail bikes, most of the Bridgton and Harrison mainline would have long ago been returned to its natural overgrown state. "Rusticators" or "flatlanders" (both terms denote summer visitors) like myself, who were unable to enjoy the Bridgton and Harrison before its abandonment in 1941, must remain in their debt and be content to remain constantly on the alert lest they miss the distant sounds of a ghostly whistle or the rhythmic chug of a phantom locomotive. □

## HIKING SUMMARY

- Day 1—Harrison to Bridgton (car)  
Bridgton to Sandy Creek
- Day 2—Ingall's Road back to Sandy Creek
- Day 3—Ingall's Road to Perley's Mill (car)  
Perley's Mill to Hancock Pond
- Day 4—Hancock Pond to Twin Lake (car)  
Twin Lake to Rankin's Mill
- Day 5—Rankin's Mill to Bridgton Junction

*Albury, a minister in North Plainfield, New Jersey, wrote his hiking piece while vacationing in Maine last summer.*

If you would like to know about the history of the Bridgton & Harrison, the author suggests the following:

- Moody, Linwood W., *The Maine Two-Footers*, Berkeley, California: Howell-North Books, 1959.
- Mead, Edgar T., Jr., *Busted and Still Running*, Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Greene Press, 1968.
- McLin, William H., *The Twenty-Four Inch Gauge Railroad at Bridgton*, Maine, Bridgton, Me.: *The Bridgton News*, 1941.
- Ziel, Ron, *The Storey of Edaville and Steamtown*, Rutland, Vt.: Sharp Printing, n.d.
- Ward, Ernest, *My First 60 Years in Harrison*, Maine, Denmark, Me.: Cardinal Printing, Co., 1966.

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# overlooking SEBAGO



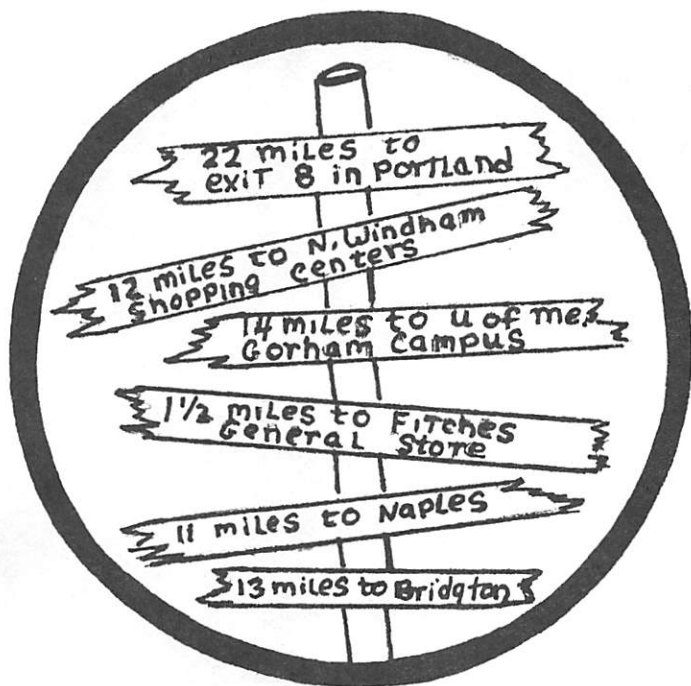


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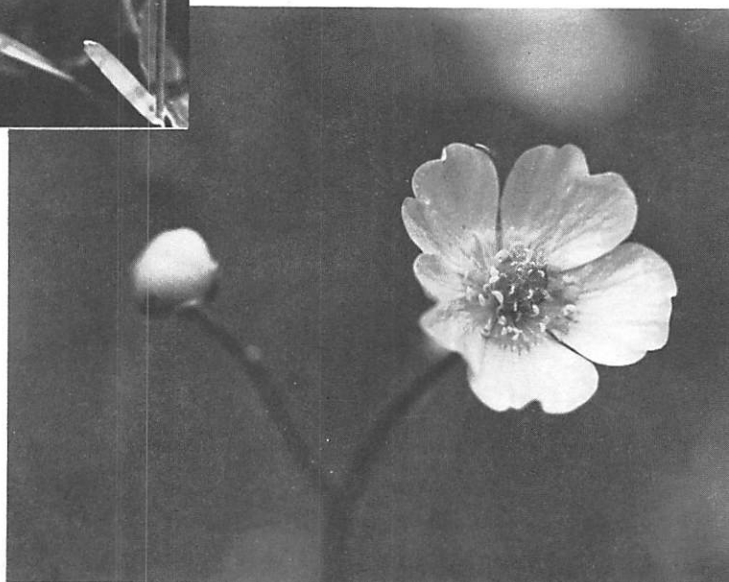


Contact:  
**Eddie Rolfe**

Harrison, Me. 04040  
207/583-2345



## Spring Wildflowers





*Photos by Tom Stockwell*

# Black Gold Through Oxford County

*by Margaret Merry Sawyer*



An entirely new mode of moving crude oil beyond Portland, Maine to Montreal began in May, 1941 when the Portland and Montreal Pipe Line Companies were formed and incorporated under the ownership of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. Previously, crude oil on its way to the Montreal refineries had been transported by tankers from foreign countries up the St. Lawrence River, a route which was closed during the winter months.

Piping the crude oil over the 236 mile course from Portland to Canada saved 12 days and a 2,000 mile tanker haul around Cape Breton Island and the Gaspé Peninsula. At a time when the tanker shortage was becoming acute because of World War II, the new pipeline would release ships hauling crude oil from the Middle East for seaboard service. In addition, it would assure a continuous year-round supply of crude oil for the Montreal refineries, unaffected by the closing to navigation of the St. Lawrence during the five-month winter period.

During the spring and summer of 1941, the J. R. Wooster Co. of Boston surveyed the main line from Portland to the Canadian border near Newport, Vermont, and the Oklahoma Contracting Company (later renamed Oklahoma Pipe Line Constructors) followed, clearing the land and laying the twelve-inch pipeline. Many local fellows were hired by the contractors to help with the construction of the first crude oil line in Maine.

It was difficult work along the right-of-way. There were mountains of solid granite to contend with, steep hillsides strewn with boulders, swift little streams, bigger streams and rivers, swamps, and mile after mile of forests.

A number of buildings were built at the six station sites in the United States: Portland, Raymond and North Waterford, Maine; Shelbourne and Lancaster, New Hampshire; and Sutton, Vermont. At the North Waterford station (the only site in Oxford County), contractors built a 200-foot-long building for the pumps and motors, a

manifold house, and a boiler house. On the hill in back of the buildings they set a 30,000 barrel storage tank. Across the road and just past the station buildings and yard they built four houses for the chief operator and three other operators. Other men who worked at the station commuted from neighboring towns. The twenty-acre grounds were fenced with a barbed wire-topped chain-link fence. (During World War II there was also a guard house inside the fence by the double gate, with a guard on duty twenty-four hours a day, as a national defense measure. The guard house and guard were removed soon after the war ended.)

The first chief operators were men with oil pumping experience in other countries and states. Robert Lewis was the first chief operator at North Waterford; John Barber and Bill Lubec, also out-of-state men, followed. Billie A. Sawyer started in 1941 as a North Waterford operator and was made chief operator in 1957. He has lived in Waterford ever since. The Company sent him to New York City to a Supervisor's School in 1958; in 1959 they sent him to Marinette, Wisconsin to attend the Ansul Chemical Company Fire School; and in May, 1970, he was sent to West Virginia University at Morgantown for Appalachian Underground Corrosion School.

Besides the chief operator, there were up to eleven other workers at the North Waterford station. From 1941 to 1967, an operator and an assistant were on duty around the clock. The four operators and four assistants, in their shifts, attended the pumps and checked the bearings on pumps and motors frequently. On those huge pieces of machinery the bearings heated up often and had to be cooled. On the hour, they reported the pressure and temperature to the Portland office. In those years, the Harrison telephone operator had to stay alert to get North Waterford's station check to the Portland office all through the night.

The ninth worker was a "swing man" who filled in for the operators and assistants, which meant he covered all three shifts—one at a time. The pipeliner and yard man helped with all odd duties, such as shoveling snow in the winter, mowing an extensive lawn area in the summer, painting the fence every year and painting the pumps when they were shut down for repairs.



The chief operator "mothered" the other station employees—at least that is how the first president of the Pipe Line Corp. described the job to Bill Sawyer. The chief operator oversaw the work and running of the pumping station, made out the payroll at his station and completed all other reports to the main office.

The twelve-inch pipeline was installed and ready to go in November, 1941. The Company pumped 60,000 barrels of crude oil a day through the line to Montreal. By 1950 the refineries in Montreal were needing more oil, so the Oklahoma Pipe Line Constructors completed an 18" line which followed in the same right-of-way through Oxford County. The capacity was boosted to 127,000 barrels a day.

About one-fourth of the total Waterford tax commitment was paid by the Portland Pipe Line Corp. in the early days. Now, because of the school district, the payment represents only a small fraction of the taxes. Other Oxford County towns benefit to a lesser degree from the pipelines going through because they have no station with buildings and pumps and motors.





Over the years, more pumps have been added. The first were plunger-style pumps; centrifugal pumps replaced them in 1965. Waterford has six.

In November, 1965, a 24" line was completed. With centrifugal pumps and three pipelines, the pumping capacity of the line was increased to 450,000 barrels of crude oil a day.

The Portland Pipe Line Corp. sold one of the houses at North Waterford when Fred Stearns and family moved out of the #3 house to buy their farm in 1958. The house was moved to Bethel, where it is owned by the Arlan Jodrey family. The remaining houses were sold in 1967 because the pumping station became automatic and controlled from Portland, with one house going above the station to Albany, one to Papoose Pond, and one to East Waterford.

Around-the-clock operators and assistants were no longer needed and all of the men except Bill Sawyer and Fred Stearns moved to other locations or retired. The equipment at the station was changed to outdoor pumps. The large pump-and-motor building was taken down, to be replaced by a metal office building. The storage tank was taken down in 1967 and a 20 x 60 foot storehouse was erected in 1974.

Bill was promoted to Maintenance Supervisor from the Raymond, Maine station to the Canadian border in Vermont. Eight years later, in 1975, he became Maintenance Supervisor #1 and Bruce Sanborn, a former Waterford boy who had been with the company 20 years, was made Supervisor #2, taking over the lines from Shelbourne, New Hampshire to Canada. Since Bill kept only the maintenance of the line from Shelbourne to Raymond and two stations, he no longer had to travel to Sutton, Vermont in the middle of the night in case of emergencies; he only had to go to New Hampshire.

For the past several summers a crew has been putting in galvoline, which gives cathodic protection to the lines—mostly the 12" line. Bill reads the meters in Harrison, Waterford, West Bethel, and Shelbourne (some weekly, some monthly) to make sure that the rectifiers are keeping a small amount of electricity on the uncoated 12" line. This stops minerals from "eating" the pipe. He must also do several hours of paper work every month for the main office, now in South Portland.

One spring before the bigger lines were built, the Waterford road commissioner, Bertram Millett, and his helper, Lauris Millett, were checking the condition of the culverts on Baker Hill when they were suddenly startled by a rumbling in the ground. It was of short duration and it wasn't an earthquake. They were puzzled: what was it?

When they talked with Bill Sawyer later, they found it was a "pig" going through the 12" pipeline. The four-foot-long metal scraper with eight arms, wheels, knifelike appendages and rubber disks, cleaned wax build-ups from the pipe periodically—more often in cold weather than in warm. That one, which had come from the Raymond station, was taken out of the scraper trap at North Waterford and replaced with a clean one to clean out the wax from North Waterford to the next station at Shelbourne. The scrapers 38 years later are made up of nylon bristles.

When the Interprovincial Pipe Line Limited's 30-inch diameter pipeline extension from Sarnia, Ontario to Montreal East was completed in 1976 and began to supply part of the Montreal refinery requirements, crude oil deliveries through the Portland-Montreal Pipe Line System began to drop. A decrease in the total Montreal refinery demands in 1978 and 1979 compared to 1977 is also contributing to the decline of the system's volume.

This past fall, four tanks out of twenty were taken out of service at the tank farm in South Portland, where the crude oil is deposited awaiting pumping; 37 fewer tankers docked at the Portland Pipe Line pier in 1978 than in 1977; and the average daily number of barrels delivered to the six Canadian oil companies that own the pipeline has dropped to 184,991.

But, since the National Defense Board of Canada still claims the Portland-Montreal Pipe Line is necessary to its national defense, black gold continues to course through Oxford County's veins. □

*Margaret Sawyer, wife of Bill Sawyer, who retired from pipeline service this year, lives in Waterford and works at the Oxford County Extension Service office in South Paris. She is a member of the Waterford Historical Society, whose recently-published Town History contained an article on the pipeline.*

# Folk Tales

## The Origin of a Landmark

It stands at the corner of Routes 5 and 35 in Lynchville, between East Stoneham and North Waterford—the most famous landmark in Maine. It's simply a signpost, put up by the state and consisting of nine boards which read: *Norway - 14 mi., Paris - 15 mi., Denmark - 23 mi., Naples - 23 mi., Sweden - 25 mi., Poland - 27 mi., Mexico - 37 mi., Peru - 46 mi., China - 94 mi.*

Although the foreign cities and countries are actually all Maine place names, the irony of the sign is not lost on anyone; and chances are that somewhere, sometime, someone in your family has either sent or received a postcard bearing the likeness of the most famous sign post in the state of Maine.

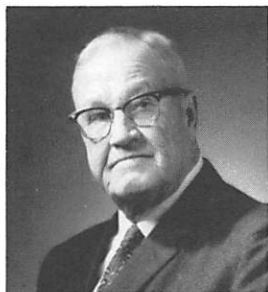
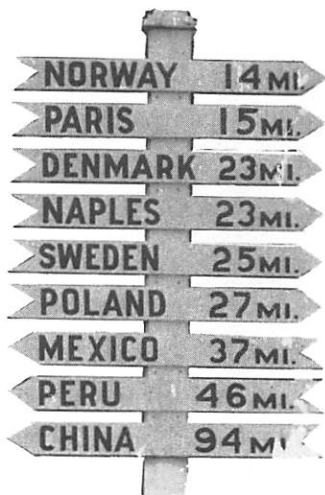
How did little Lynchville become "the center of the world?" How did the sign come to be made and placed there? When those questions were posed at *BitterSweet*, we had the answers immediately, for the Lynchville sign has always been known in our house as "Grampa's sign." Actually, it was not really Grampa's idea at all, but was a joint effort. This is the tale of the sign:

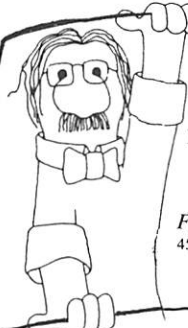
Sometime around the end of the 1930's, the late James C. "Jimmy" Chute of the renowned Chute Homestead in Naples was searching for an attention-getting gimmick to attract tourists to our fair state. He is the one who hit upon using the unusual foreign-named towns in some way. When he talked it over with our grandfather (and his very distant relative) Walter Chute of Harrison, the idea of the location of a signpost occurred.

Grampa was then State Highway Maintenance Supervisor; he proposed the idea to the state, got approval, searched for the right location, and placed the signpost there. Since that time, the thing has been so popular that it has been stolen and replaced several times; countless tourists have had their pictures taken at "the center of the world;" and thousands of postcards and wooden or plastic replicas have been sold and circulated all over the world. □

Nancy Chute Marcotte

*Above is the original signpost, replaced several times because of theft and vandalism; at the left is the late Walter Chute of Harrison, who erected the famous landmark*






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...Page 19

that, when workers ask for a wetter mix to set the footings for posts, I can't immediately provide it. The mix still comes out a perfect consistency for wall work!

Thankfully, it's lunch break. Time to listen to Jack Henstridge, Canadian disciple of cordwood construction, espouse the benefits of this centuries-old building technique.

"Every time man has needed it, it has shown up again," says Henstridge, author of a book on this simple, inexpensive and heat-efficient method of construction.

Brought to the Litchfield Fair Grounds by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, the Rural Housing Institute and Community Action Program housing project, Henstridge clearly welcomes the opportunity to give as many people as possible a hands-on look at the procedure.

By afternoon, people are sawing, chopping, measuring, and mortaring. I am hauling bags of dry cements, throwing ingredients together and, occasionally, piling logs up on one of the walls.

Finally, with the sun setting and supper cooking for us at the home of some C.A.P. people, we clean up and sit back to survey the work. I am bone-weary, covered with white dust from head to foot, and excruciatingly thirsty. But I look at six and seven-foot walls with pride and amazement.

What have I learned? I have found that cordwood construction is a good way to build under any of the following circumstances: if the number of people doing the building is limited to only a couple; if there is limited access to the property; or if there is very little money available. Cordwood building takes plenty of time but, unlike traditional log construction, it doesn't demand a big crew for lifting logs since they are short and portable.

A 16-foot-square building, I am told, takes four cords of wood (cut up into 12" sections). Jack Henstridge has quoted figures of under \$5,000 for construction of whole houses, including the foundation, roof, and other materials. (This cost could be even less if you own a woodlot or have access to salvaged materials.)

I've learned that cordwood buildings can be of many styles, ranging from this rough shed, built of many different sizes and types of wood, to an elegant ranch house, built entirely of matched redwood wedges and white mortar. I've seen slides of a building

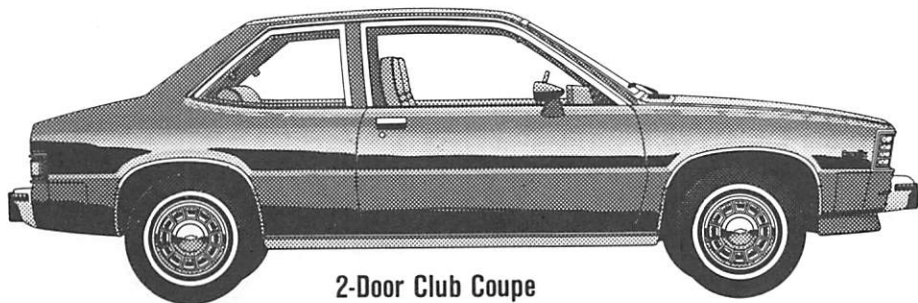
Page 56...

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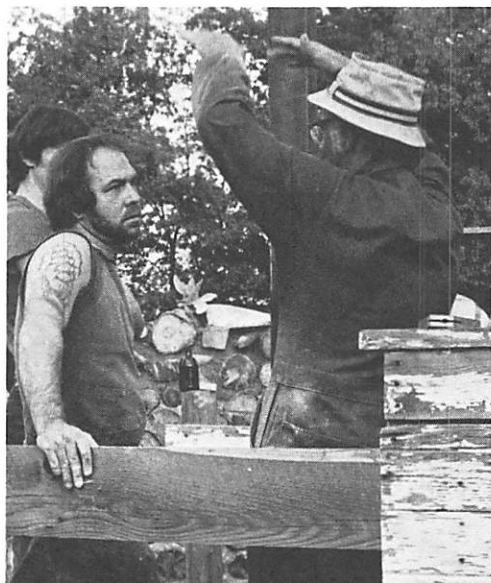
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...Page 20

There is also a danger of being too idealistic, of "throwing the baby out with the bathwater" or trying to discard all technology, even in situations where it may

also be appropriate. Angering or confusing the population is not the goal of the Rural Housing Institute. Instead, tempered with pragmatism and practicality, its members are involved with low-key, self-sufficient, helpful projects which take all available resources into account.

For instance, they are now beginning to implement, with other agencies, a plan to combat the problems of unnatural water contamination when never-before-dry wells in the area begin to come back. Schulz and Hodges are working on an anticipated water-sampling blitz of the county, as well as the dissemination of information about why the wells are contaminated and how to purify them.

The effort will utilize the Institute's resource center, as well as its people, who are the energy behind the resources.

"We want to live gently on the earth, to take as little from it, permanently, as we can," says Hodges. "It's healthier." □

*Marcotte, a member of Fare Share Co-op in South Paris, a mother of two, and a student at the University of Southern Maine, is BitterSweet's copy and production editor.*



# Medicine For The Hills



by Michael A. Lacombe, M.D.

## THE AMERICAN DREAM

To wake up one morning and find yourself thin—that is The American Dream. We all wish to be made thin, passively stripped of our fat without ever having refused a cookie. Advertising appeals to this shared fantasy every day, with its “new,” “effortless,” “quick,” “miracle” schemes to shed weight. We delude ourselves into seeking a painless approach to this goal because, I believe, we have lost our will to work and to sacrifice. We dream of “total immersion” whereby, filled with nouns and verbs, we become fluent in French in a week. Beating our breasts in martyrdom, we forego the soaps to watch the classics on television (rather than reading them) so that we might painlessly earn the title of intellectual. At college we sacrifice the basics for “relevant” courses and get paid off in easy credits for social protest, glib rhetoric, and self-absorption. We are told, after all, that we are to go around only once in life, so we must get on with grabbing all the gusto we can. Self-denial? Nonsense! We have a right—no, a duty—to ourselves: to consume.

And when this self-gratification renders us plump, we then steel ourselves for the “crash program.” We buy all the glossy books. Drinking gallons of water, we joy in urinating all that fat away. First, “Dr. Atkins’ Diet Revolution,” then “The Fat Free Forever Diet,” then on to “Carbo-Cal,” and the “Amazing New You Diet.” We jog, we wash the windows, we split wood, and imagine the pounds rolling off. Time out for some nourishment to keep our strength; then back at it. And after three weeks of torture and praiseworthy demonstration,

we find we have lost not an ounce. The brow furrows knowingly, the eyes squint against the blinding insight, the Seat of Wisdom whispers to us: “It’s hormonal.” Hat in hand, we load our flesh into the car, off to the doctor.

“It’s hormonal...tell me the secrets of losing weight...make me thin.”

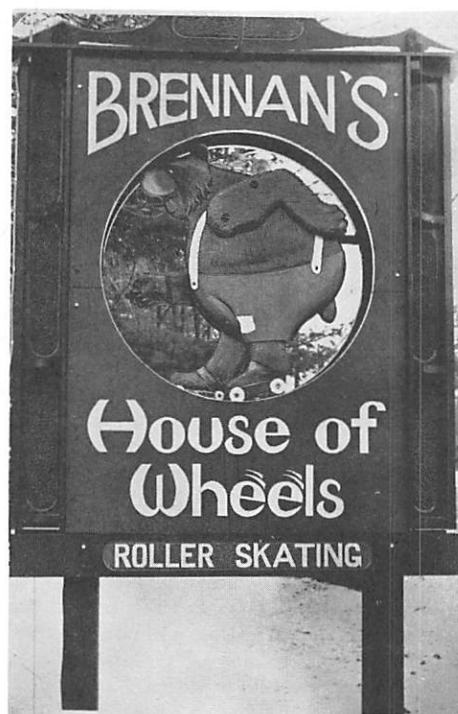
“No, it isn’t. There are no secrets. I can’t,” he replies.

Our self-delusion is incredible. Self-image is couched in pleasant euphemisms: “stocky,” “plump,” “heavy,” “big-boned.” We imagine ourselves filled as much with “potential” as with fat; with a secret smugness we imagine how much more sexy, youthful, athletic, and efficient we’d be if twenty pounds less. But losing weight is hard work and requires total honesty. Few make it. Why?

We’ve seen one reason already—we all share the ethic of self-gratification these days. Anything painful, difficult, self-denying, is to be avoided. But there are other reasons for this prevalence of obesity and for the high failure rate of weight reduction programs.

We Americans have an over-abundance of food, especially processed and “junk” foods which deliver more calories per bite. These easy calories contribute to insidious weight gain. Inactivity over prolonged periods of time, as with television addiction and with middle age, compounds the problem. We are not a nation of walkers nor bike riders. Easy calories and inactivity can add many pounds in a year’s time.

There is good evidence that obesity in infancy disposes one to intractable obesity in adulthood. One is fat both by virtue of the number of fat cells in the body (capacity to store fat) and by the amount of fat stored in each cell. In other words, a person with few fat cells has little capacity to store fat. Overfed infants are endowed with, and cursed with, more fat cells for life than their normal counterparts. Those who have been obese since infancy may be partly correct when they say that “everything I eat turns to fat;” that is, correct in that if they eat more calories than they expend, the excess may be more easily stored as fat. Overfed infants are a symptom of our food-preoccupied culture. A baby is not “healthy” unless fat. Aunt Gertrude is offended if seconds are refused. Get-togethers are highlighted by abundant calories. “He’s off his feed.” “Fat and prosperous.”



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Fat people behave differently in a metabolic way than do those of normal weight. They are, for example, much less active—movies of children in playgrounds have shown this. They have different feeding controls than normals; they have no compensatory period of abstinence after overeating, as do normals; and they tend to eat on time cues from the clock rather than when hungry. They eat fewer meals per day, bunching their calories in one or two large meals, a practice known to enhance fat storage. Finally, they have the self-defeating rationalizations which we all harbor to a varying degree: food is used as a tranquilizer, as a reward, to assuage anger and injustice, and to please others (as in "I'm only eating this to please...").

If we eat while standing, or eat hurriedly, or eat alone on the sly, or don't really "enjoy" it, it's not fattening. If we load up before the big event, we're sure we'll burn it off. We use artificial sweeteners as though they melted away the fat, and believe we should compensate to stay healthy. We skip breakfast, then overcompensate later. We "prepare" for an anticipated missed meal by gorging ourselves, and then—lo and behold—somehow we don't miss the meal after all. We eat for two.

Let it go to the dog, or to waste, we put it on our waists. We eat only 'tidbits' because the whole is believed not to be the sum of its parts. And, in the end, we eat more than we burn up, we get fat, and we look around for someone else to blame. This is true, in the final analysis, whether we have been obese life-long or have wakened at forty, wondering what happened.

When is one considered obese? Overweight? When considering the health hazards of obesity, these terms require more than a subjective impression. The height-weight table printed below can serve as a rough guide. It does not apply to the weightlifter or football lineman, but for the rest of us, it will do. Quite simply, if you are over the upper limit for your height, you are *overweight*. If you are overweight by more than 20% of your ideal weight, you are *obese*. If you weigh two times your ideal weight or more, you are *morbidly obese*—morbid in the medical sense of connoting serious consequences.

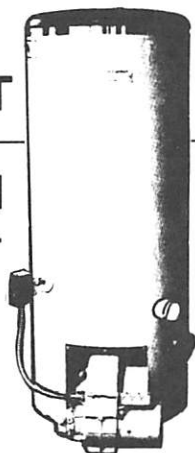
Obese people are discriminated against. They lose out in relationships, in sex, in job applications, in medical care (through

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inadequate examinations and complications from surgery); they lose out in life. Obesity is a health hazard, and like the arthritic, the obese person is easy prey to quacks and gimmicks. There are solutions, but none are easy, and none without cost.

In the next few articles we will examine the health consequences of obesity, and look at various therapies and at exercise as it relates to weight reduction. □

*Dr. Lacombe is a member of the Stephens Memorial Hospital Health Education Project Advisory Board and Oxford Hills Internal Medicine Group.*

### HEIGHT-WEIGHT CHART

Height (in shoes)	Small frame	Medium frame	Large frame
	MEN		
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
5 ft. 2 in.	112-120	118-129	126-141
5 ft. 3 in.	115-123	121-133	129-144
5 ft. 4 in.	118-126	124-136	132-148
5 ft. 5 in.	121-129	127-139	135-152
5 ft. 6 in.	124-133	130-143	138-156
5 ft. 7 in.	128-137	134-147	142-161
5 ft. 8 in.	132-141	138-152	147-166
5 ft. 9 in.	136-145	142-156	151-170
5 ft. 10 in.	140-150	146-160	155-174
5 ft. 11 in.	144-154	150-165	159-179
6 ft.	148-158	154-170	164-184
6 ft. 1 in.	152-162	158-175	168-189
6 ft. 2 in.	156-167	162-180	173-194
6 ft. 3 in.	160-171	167-185	178-199
6 ft. 4 in.	164-175	172-190	182-204

WOMEN			
4 ft. 10 in.	92-98	96-107	104-119
4 ft. 11 in.	94-101	98-110	106-122
5 ft.	96-104	101-113	109-125
5 ft. 1 in.	99-107	104-116	112-128
5 ft. 2 in.	102-110	107-119	115-131
5 ft. 3 in.	105-113	110-122	118-134
5 ft. 4 in.	108-116	113-126	121-138
5 ft. 5 in.	111-119	116-130	125-142
5 ft. 6 in.	114-123	120-135	129-146
5 ft. 7 in.	118-127	124-139	133-150
5 ft. 8 in.	122-131	128-143	137-154
5 ft. 9 in.	126-135	132-147	141-158
5 ft. 10 in.	130-140	136-151	145-163
5 ft. 11 in.	134-144	140-155	149-168
6 ft.	138-148	144-159	153-173

# Ayah

We consider your comments and suggestions an important means of discovering our readers' interests. Representative and appropriate letters will be published as space allows. Most likely answers won't be necessary, and probably the only response you'll receive will be a most appropriate "Ayah!"

## NUTRITION IN THE OXFORD HILLS

Oxford Hills area people had a rare opportunity for community involvement recently. The Nutrition Program organized by workers from the Extension Service, the High School, Community Services and the Hospital gave many of us a chance to learn about healthful eating habits, to sample scrumptious natural foods, and to converse with our neighbors on matters of health and diet. There was a great diversity of outfits involved, and so people with different interests began to talk about their common concern: healthy, well-fed people. I met and listened to teachers, parents, and other interested folks in workshops on nutrition education, the hot lunch program, Headstart meals, and preparing natural foods. I learned a lot and met some

concerned and active citizens. May more such programs come along soon, since they brighten the future of our community health and prosperity. □

Ken Morse  
Waterford

## WORLD TRAVELS

I received my first copy of **BitterSweet** yesterday. I was much interested in the article about Luther Whiting Mason. Much has been written about the power of music. If the time comes when communication is established with another world, music might be the means to bridge the language gap. It would depend on whether or not the vibrations of musical notes are universal.

When Matthew Perry took his fleet of nine sailing ships and two steam-driven (the Mississippi and the Poatan) into the harbor at Yokohama they found the inner harbor blocked by a barrier of ships. The two steam-driven ships broke the barrier and the American fleet entered the harbor that had been denied them so long.

It is a coincidence that the name Perry is a part of your local history. □

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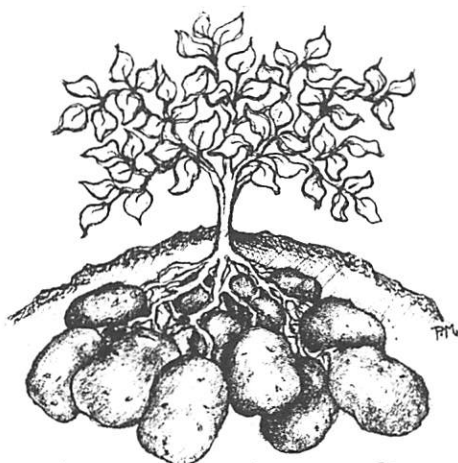
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# Homemade

## POTATO: THE VERSATILE VEGETABLE

by Nancy Marcotte

Spring is nearly here—the wind blows chill every night but during the day the sun is melting the snow from the bare ground. Down in the cellar, the cupboards are getting mighty bare also. Most of the vegetables you canned last fall have been eaten during the winter. The fiddleheads aren't up yet and you're sick of stewed tomatoes. What now?

If you're like many of us in Maine, you turn to the potato. And if you're tired of plain boiled and baked potatoes, there are lots of good old potato ideas to stimulate the scraping-the-pantry-bottom blues.

Potatoes are unsung heroes of the food budget. Banned unfairly by many dieters, the potato (*solanum tuberosum*) is in reality a valuable food item—it contains necessary protein, vitamin C, B vitamins, potassium, iron, other minerals, carbohydrates, and bulk; and helps to maintain the body's acid-alkaline balance. It's also inexpensive and it keeps well.

If the potato is good-sized, firm, relatively smooth and sound (no black spots or hollow heart), it's suitable for almost any use. If the potato is wilted, leathery, or badly discolored, it's probably unsatisfactory. Potatoes that are very green have been "burned"—either by the sun or long exposure to artificial light—and may be bitter. Some areas of rot or sprouting probably won't affect taste and the potato can be used by cutting away the wasted part.

If you *never* tire of boiled or baked potatoes, try this—before cooking, scrub potatoes with a vegetable brush and remove all blemishes or sprouts. Keep the jackets on to retain all the nutritive elements (one way to do this is to pare only a few thin strips from the center of the potato; another is to wash with a clean wire scraper or chore ball). Clean and cooked potato skins are a treat to many people.

There's a tale from some "old wives" about the right way to cook root vegetables: since they're grown under the cool ground, they should be washed in cold water and cooked in cold water in a covered pot. (Vegetables grown above ground should, of course, be started in hot water and cooked in a pot with no lid, the tale goes.)

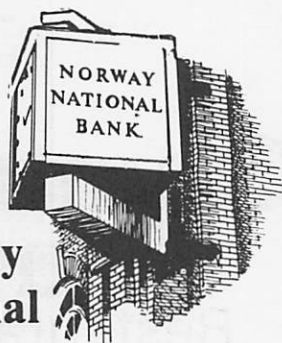
### MOM'S BEST POTATO SALAD

Scrub and boil (with skins on) enough potatoes to fill as many people as you have to serve. When done (Soft but not crumbly), throw the potatoes in a dish full of cold water, cool and slip the skins off. Cube cooked potatoes, add diced onions and marinate in sweet pickle juice for as long as possible (at least an hour), stirring occasionally. Before serving, add diced dill pickles, boiled eggs, etc., Season with salt, pepper and mayonnaise to taste, add 1 T. mustard for flavor & color.

### AN OLD WAY TO MASH POTATOES

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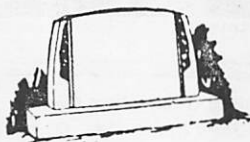


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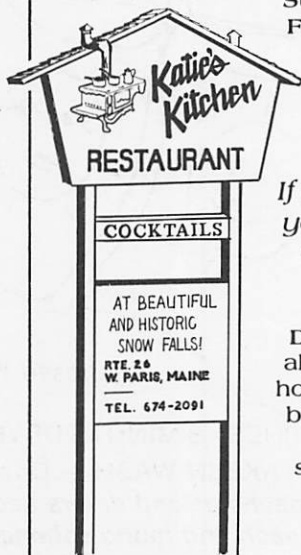
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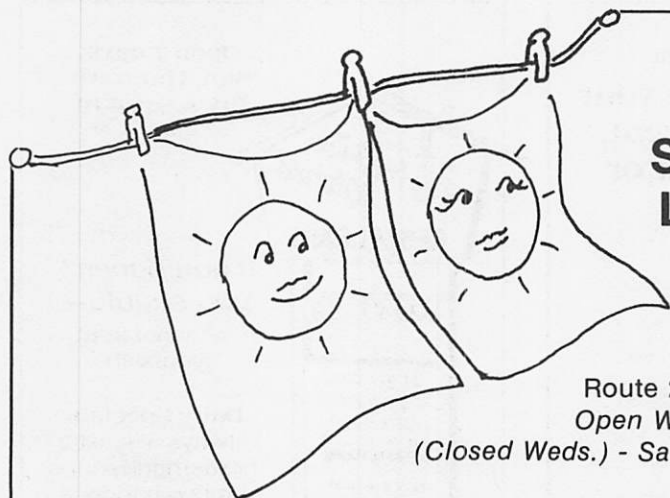
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potatoes are a simple treat that require a little care in preparation to achieve that perfection.

Boil potatoes until done but not broken. Drain them in a colander and wipe the kettle dry, then put the potatoes back in the kettle and beat them with a wire whip or a fork (most potato mashers will beat the vegetable to a pulp without achieving the desired fluffy lightness). There is a tool which has been used in our family since the days when grandmother Carrie Haynes used to feed hoards of summer boarders and hungry hay-rakers: the old-fashioned ricer. When potato is riced first, it will whip up quickly to the consistency of a feather. A very old cookbook recommends piling mashed potatoes loosely in a serving bowl, topping with chives, parsley, pepper, paprika, or what-have-you, dabbing them with butter and tucking them into a warm oven for about three minutes while the butter melts. (Tomorrow, steam leftover mashed potatoes in the top of a double boiler to heat.)

This is where potatoes start to get fattening—it's what you add to them that does it!

### HASH BROWNS

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 3 c. finely chopped cold, peeled, cooked white potatoes |                          |
| 3 T. flour  | 1 T. minced onion        |
| ¼ c. top milk or light cream                            | ½ tsp. salt              |
| ⅛ tsp. pepper   | 3 T. butter or margarine |

Combine all ingredients except butter, mix well. Heat 2 T. butter in a heavy 9" skillet, turn potato mixture in. Shake pan from side to side while cooking to keep the large cake from sticking, and cook over medium heat until brown and crusty on one side. Turn the potato out onto a clean plate, wipe the skillet dry and add remaining 1 T. butter. Slide the cake back into the pan and cook the other side. Shape edges, shake pan. Cut into wedges to serve four hungry people.

### POTATO PANCAKES

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 large raw white potatoes | 1 T. grated onion          |
| (1 lb.)                    | 2 eggs, beaten             |
| 2 T. flour                 | 1 tsp. salt                |
| dash of pepper             | salad oil or melted butter |

Wash, pare and grate raw potatoes with a fine grater. Quickly stir in onion, eggs, flour and seasonings and drop from tablespoon into ½" hot salad oil in a skillet. Spread each pancake with the back of a spoon until thin. Saute both sides until light brown, drain on crumpled paper towels. Cooked bacon may be added to the mixture before cooking, but cook the batter immediately to avoid darkening. Makes 8-10 cakes.

These are both interesting breakfast dishes, but the Germans and some other European people eat potato pancakes at any meal. In New England, where we eat "supper" in the evening, potatoes have always shown up in casserole dishes to grace the table. Any good cookbook carries recipes for scalloped and au gratin potatoes, shepherd's pie, and the like. Potatoes are a staple item in the week's stew pot as well.

To be continued next month—

Potato Desserts, Crafts, Tips





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# Goings On

## ART

**DAVID FULLER PHOTOGRAPHS:** Bates College Treat Gallery through June 4. Gallery hours: M-F 1-4:30 & 7-8 p.m. / Sun. 2-5. Free.

**WESTERN MAINE ART GROUP:** Beginning summer schedule—June 12-24, Portland School of Art Travelling Exhibit; June 26-July 8, 18th Annual Members Show. Gallery on upper Main Street, Norway; hours: Tues.-Sat. 10-5 / Sun. 2-7. Donation.

## MUSIC

**WILD MOUNTAIN THYME:** Bluegrass music, May 16, 7:30 p.m. Part of the Wednesday Night Series at Gould Academy, Bethel. Free.

## THEATRE

**GEORGES DANDIN:** by Moliere, May 18-19, 8:00 p.m. / May 20, 2:00 p.m. Bates College Schaeffer Theatre, Lewiston. Admission: Adults \$2.50 / Students \$1.25.

**PIPPIN:** Presented by Hebron Academy's Drama Dept.—a musical comedy of love, identity, and magic. May 16-19, each evening at 8:00 p.m., Sat. matinee at 2:00 p.m. Admission by reservation only (207/966-2100). Admission: Adults \$2.00 / Students \$1.00.

## SPECIALS

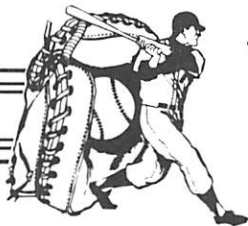
**HEBRON ACADEMY'S 175th BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL:** May 12. Parade, balloon rides, athletic events, birthday cake. All are invited.

**PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE ON DEATH, GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT:** sponsored by Tri-County Mental Health & Lewiston Funeral Home Owners' Assoc., May 8, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Knights of Columbus Auditorium, 150 East Ave., Lewiston. Registration fee: \$5.00, including lunch.

**QUILT SHOW:** sponsored by Pine Tree Quilters' Guild, June 22-23-24, 10-5 daily at North Hall Dining Room, University of Maine, South St., Farmington. Fabrics, findings, handcrafts for sale as well as quilts on exhibit. Donation \$1.00. For information contact Virginia Morrell, Chandler Rd., Strong, Me. 04938.

**FARE SHARE CO-OP STORE:** Moving to 62 High Street, South Paris. Open from the first of May: Thurs. 2-6 / Fri. 2-8 / Sat. 10-5. Natural Foods and information, lower prices (a consumer-run co-operative). **SPECIAL EVENTS:** *Contra dance and spaghetti supper*, to benefit store, May 5, location t.b.a. *Variety Show & Silent Auction*, May 19, Bear Mt. Grange Hall, South Waterford. *Annual Meeting for Members*, May 23, First Congregational Church, South Paris, 7:30 p.m. following potluck supper.

# RED SOX ON 93X



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## 1979 BOSTON RED SOX SCHEDULE

MAY		1	2	3	4	5
		Oakland 10:30 p.m.	Oakland 10:30 p.m.		Seattle 7:30 p.m.	Seattle 2:00 p.m.
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Seattle 2:00 p.m.	California 7:30 p.m.	California 7:30 p.m.	California 7:30 p.m.	California 7:30 p.m.	Oakland 7:30 p.m.	Oakland 2:00 p.m.
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Oakland 2:00 p.m.	Baltimore 7:30 p.m.	Baltimore 7:30 p.m.	Baltimore 7:30 p.m.	Baltimore 7:30 p.m.	New York 7:30 p.m.	New York 2:00 p.m.
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
New York 2:00 p.m.	Baltimore 7:30 p.m.	Baltimore 7:30 p.m.	Baltimore 7:30 p.m.	Baltimore 7:30 p.m.	Toronto 7:30 p.m.	Toronto 1:30 p.m.
27	28	29	30	31		
Toronto 1:30 p.m.	Texas 8:35 p.m.	Texas 8:35 p.m.	Texas 8:35 p.m.			

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Well folks, we've survived the Winter of '79, with its snow, rain, and cold waves. We survived the sequence of storms in January that produced an incredible 54 inches of snow and several freezing rain storms. We survived the Cold War of February that made it agony to slip into cold sheets. And finally, we survived the late season snow of April that threatened to make any ball player stir-crazy. And with the late snow we got a crown storm to keep my forecasting record intact—we recorded  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches of snow for the April 9th northeaster. Despite a record January snowfall, we recorded a total of  $102\frac{1}{2}$  inches of snow—normal for a winter; the January snow was matched by a dry February and March.

But we're not out of the woods yet. We're still in for some late season suffering. Yes, I'm going to talk about the ever-feared late season snow. The latest snow that we have ever recorded has been during the second week of April but, actually, we are vulnerable to snow any time cold air is about. For example, a mid-June snowstorm lashed the northeast in 1842. A strong low-pressure system tracked up the St. Lawrence River and brought cold air down behind it. (This is unusual because usually by June most ice and snow in Canada is gone, so there is no source for cold air.) As that storm passed moist air and filtered into the northeast, presto—instant snow!

Jim Tyler of Watford remembers a late season snowfall during the 1940's. "It was about May 11th or 12th and it snowed seven or eight inches. Some say a foot, but I don't think so," he remembers. "It was a pretty good storm. We had cows out and some of us brought the cows right back in and some brought hay out to the cows in the fields." As we can see, late season snowfalls are not extremely rare.

Late snows and long winters present an interesting question about the seasons that is asked many times. Why isn't April as warm as August if they have days that are equal in

length? While sitting on our sundeck in April, trying to get a tan and only being snowed upon, I have asked this question, also. The answer is that the weather tends to lag behind the seasons. In April and May, despite the length of the day, cold air is still present in Canada where the snow hasn't melted yet. It isn't as cool in August because the area still contains the heat of summer and there is no source of cold air—Canada is as warm as the United States. So, if you wake one day, discover that it's spring, and pop outside to soak up some rays, don't be surprised if you come face-to-face with a blizzard.

May in Maine is the true beginning of spring. The snowpack is gone and grass appears in the ground. Have you ever noticed the smell of a true spring day? Maybe after being cooped up in a cold house for six months with only the smell of dogs and cats we've forgotten the smell of warm air. The gods of Olympus had nectar and ambrosia, but we have spring air.

Certain events distinguish spring: making dams to block the flow of the small streams that run alongside the roads in spring, sailing small paper boats down streams and skilfully guiding them over rapids and rocks, seeing the lawn for the first time in six months and discovering dozens of mole-trails criss-crossing it. There is one more event that makes me remember spring, but I hesitate to mention it. Yes, it's that time of year again—the time of agony, frustration and pain. No, not booster shot time, it's the unwelcome black fly.

Just when we think it's safe to go outdoors, the black fly pins us to our houses. A typical battle goes like this: in the morning we look outside. Good, we think, there's a breeze blowing, no problem from the bugs today. We don our best repellent-impregnated hat. We step outside, the way a soldier climbs out of his foxhole. The battle commences with the fierceness of a brawl. We act as if we're on fire: flailing arms, bumping into trees and rocks, blinded by flies in our eyes and deafened by the things in our ears. In agony, we manage to climb and crawl back into the house.

Do we really hate the black fly? What would spring be, without a little action? I remember baseball practices; you've never seen so much hustle by a team in your life.

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but by afternoon you are wondering again if you could possibly find enough dandelions for supper!

Natives of Maine who read this will say I am rushing the season and getting ahead of the month, but this seems to be an average May, from all my past records. Of course, the seasons vary and each one is different. It is possible for the ice not to leave the lakes until the second week of May. Many times the Mayflowers do not bloom until the first of June. But May can usually be depended on to produce warm weather, a fresh-vacuumed look to the earth, dandelions on the lawns, and a new beauty for the most abandoned farm or neglected home.

May brings beauty to even the little settlements that spring up all over Maine, just outside the outskirts of towns and villages. These settlements, usually called Shantytown, are made up of small houses or camps with a lean-to built on. Summer people look at them and say, "How can people live in such places?" People live there much as they do in larger, more comfortable homes—provide a home for their children, have enough to eat.

In the Shantytown near our town there are several families. Some are well educated. All of them pay their bills, dress well, belong to organizations, and work in the church—all characteristics of good citizens. I do not know why they settled in Shantytown. I have an idea they thought it would be only temporary, but were happy and contented and never got around to moving elsewhere. The homes are very easily heated in winter, and are as cool as any place in summer. These people would not consider living in an apartment house if rent was furnished free. They were never in a night club, and do not go to Florida in the winter, but they live a good, useful life.

One of the sweetest women I ever knew once lived in this Shantytown. She is a woman who never had a permanent or a facial, whose face shows no sign of her hard life or her sorrow in giving a son to her country, who watched her blue service star turn to gold, and who is always ready with her friendly smile and glad to lend her helping hands wherever they are needed—an example of courage, love, and sacrifice.

You who dare sneer at Shantytowns, sneer at part of the base of Maine. Hearts can break in Shantytown as well as in New York,

and little boys who are running barefoot there can grow up to be president.

Memorial Day is the only holiday in the state in May, a holiday that is never forgotten and one of which the youngest school-age child is taught the meaning. Every town report has an article in the warrant each year, "to see what sum of money the Town will raise for Memorial Day expenses." It was a big day in the life of small children, brought up as we were where amusements were scarce. The school arranged an afternoon of "pieces" to speak and singing, which was practiced for weeks in fear and trembling. When the day arrived we were dressed in white dresses and shoes and prepared to march from the church to the cemetery. The weather was a matter of great consideration. What if it should rain? Would the heavy dew ruin our carefully polished white shoes? Or, horrible to contemplate, would we forget our piece? The youngest children marched at the head of the parade, carrying small flags and flowers. A halt was called at the tiny brook and flowers were cast on the very stagnant waters, in memory of the men who were lost at sea. At the cemetery, all soldiers' graves were decorated with flowers, and we stood in our tight shoes, erect and proud, while the older children recited their exercises. The parade was performed with much trouble and confusion and marched back to the church where a bountiful dinner was served at a small cost to adults and without charge to the children.

Memorial Day is still observed in much the same manner, through the dinner has been given up now and my small daughter proudly waves her flag at the head of the parade in which I once marched.

May brings the fulfillment of the past month's promises. April has now grown up from the pouting lass to a woman of quiet, settled ways—a woman who keeps her house shining, her flowers well tended, and greets her friends with a smile instead of a burst of tears. She is able to meet the more mature June with the same self-confidence that all Maine ladies have. □

*Inez Farrington, a native of East Stoneham, now resides at the Ledgeview Nursing Home in West Paris. In addition to her book, **Maine Is Forever**, from which the article above is reprinted, Mrs. Farrington has written material for **Redbook** and **The Ford Times** as well as several books of poetry.*



made by dipping the inside end of each log in linseed oil and the outside edge in preservative stain in the process of building. I've seen pictures of snug little cabins built with 18" logs, and others finished inside with conventional wall board and paneling.

There is even a cordwood house in existence which has achieved an appearance believed by many to be impossible: smooth walls both inside and out. The feat was accomplished by building two layers of 9" logs, with the irregular ends of both meeting between the layers. The space between the logs was stuffed with insulation and windows were oriented south. Now, the home is *too* hot, and the auxiliary heat pump has never been used!

I come away impressed, as does almost everyone who comes in contact with this innovative, simple approach to low-cost construction which makes the most of local resources.

Information on cordwood construction is available from the Rural Housing Institute, Market Square, South Paris.



N.M.

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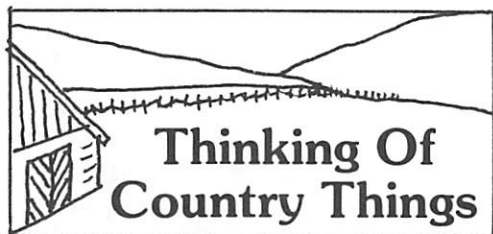
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# Thinking Of Country Things

by John Meader

## SOIL CONDITIONING

Spring and the fancy turns to thoughts of earth. There's a desire to sink a spade into it, or to run a tiller or plow across it. The end is, of course, to see green things growing again.

Soil is a substance I've been mulling about for quite some time; and as with many other such things, the more I learn in the way of specifics, the less I feel I know for sure.

We're told, for instance, that soil contains a long list (from fifteen or so & up) of soluble minerals that contribute to plant growth. But other relatively inert materials make up the bulk of what we call soil—small chips of mica, chunks of quartz, lumps of garnet, for example. Most soil contains sand and, in itself, is not simple.

Most soils also carry some humus. Humus results from the decomposition of plant matter (mostly), and that decomposition in turn results from, in part, the presence of bacteria and fungi. Soil acids or alkaloids act a major role. The presence or absence of oxygen determines to some degree whether decomposition released methane or ammonia. Buffering matter in the soil enters into the various chemistries. Water, of course, is crucial to the transaction of chemical processes and the transfer of chemicals through the surface of roots.

This is the most sketchy sort of picture; but, even so, perhaps it catches some of the complexity that makes me think twice and thrice about soil. It also makes me think there are no simple answers about growing things in it.

But after all, plants long ago learned to live in soil; long before we humans attempted to play any part in the process. Plants have developed marvellous ways of simplifying and modifying their soil environment as it affects them.

Legumes are notable for their ability to capture atmospheric nitrogen for use in growing plant tissue; nitrogen forms an

intrinsic part of chlorophyll. As another example, roots at times release carbon dioxide into the soil where it reacts with water to form carbonic acid. Carbonic acid may then contribute to the breakdown of organic material into plant food.

The interrelationships of plants and soils are myriad. In face of such complexity, our role thankfully is more humble than that of supervision. Ours is merely to lend a hand.

In the way of lending a hand, my first concern about any patch of ground intended for planting is to determine its general suitability for raising the crops I have in mind. Drainage, soil types, availability of light, amount of topsoil, access, and related questions all must play a part. I shan't go into this in detail, because the detail is simply too great. Advice can be gotten from the Soil & Conservation Service; proper drainage and erosion control are especially important.

Choice of appropriate soil types is also important. I realize many gardeners have one and only one place to plant, and it is either clay-ey or sandy or nicely loamy, and that's that. But steps can be taken to modify soils and of that we'll talk in a bit.

My next concern about any piece of gardening ground is to figure out if its pH is appropriate for the crop. It's easy to make too much over soil acidity or alkalinity (as indicated by pH), but it should be addressed.

Most soils around here are somewhat acid and if left alone tend to become more acid. (The term "run-down" is frequently used.) However, most crops raised around here prefer or tolerate somewhat acid soil; thus the problem is reduced.

It is not, however, reduced to nothing. Blueberries, for example, require a rather acid soil, while asparagus, on the other hand, requires a nearly neutral soil; and you can't successfully raise both on the same piece of ground without taking steps to alter the pH.

The alteration of pH in these parts usually involves making the soil less acid, and to this end calcium (lime) is usually applied. Increased acid can be achieved by adding sulfur in some form—aluminum sulfate, for example. But in both cases, radical changes in pH, by which I mean changes of more than one unit of pH (that is—from 5.0 to 6.0, or vice versa), are not easily or quickly brought about, and can be in some cases prohibitively expensive.

In general, however, local soils, if not limed recently, will require an application of lime at the rate of between 50 and 100 pounds per 1000 square feet. Fifty pounds should raise the pH by about three-quarters of a point. Specific recommendations may be obtained by arranging for a soil test through the Extension Service. One then uses a heel or a stick to scuff out the boundaries of an area 20 x 50 feet, say; dumps a bag of lime in the middle and proceeds to bail the stuff on.

Several words of caution. The desired effect of lime is not immediate, and it's usually best to lime one year (in the fall, perhaps) and then plant the next. But don't do as I once did. I managed to get the new ground plowed and the lime spread, but then the ground froze before I could harrow, and before it rained, either of which would have worked the lime into the soil. As it was, the wind came on to blow hard and swept a good part of the lime off the frozen surface and into the adjacent alder bottom. The alders don't seem to mind, but I do.

If you are one of the many who burn wood for heat these days, wood ashes are a good source of calcium (20 percent or so). Ashes also have the advantage of containing potassium at the rate of about 50%. If memory serves me, the first patent ever granted by the United States, George Washington then presiding, was for a process extracting potash (potassium carbonate) from wood ashes.

As for other measures to modify soil, the use of cover crops or green manure is of great importance. Soil modification of course also involves getting out the weeds—witchgrass, especially—and this, as well as the use of cover crops, works to the desirable end of adding organic material to the soil.

Organic matter improves both sandy and clayey soils. Clay soil is loosened and better aerated by the presence of plant fibers, while sandy soil's capacity for holding moisture is increased.

Since I have both soil types I pay a lot of attention to the use of cover crops. I try to plow new ground a year before putting it into production. I lime, if needed, and then sow something tolerant of acidity, like oats. If the pH is well up, I might try sweet clover, because it can fix nitrogen in the soil. Once the oats are pretty well up, I'll cut them into the soil with a disk harrow, and then plant the same piece to winter rye. For summer

Page 62...




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And don't we all boast to outsiders about the ferociousness of our domestic savages? My uncle from Massachusetts won't set foot over the state line during black fly season. Of course, we don't the black fly, but we do take pride in it, just as we take pride in our long, hard winters.

The weather patterns shift dramatically in spring. Winter storms, caused mostly by the clashing of warm, moist air with cold air, are no more. Since no clashes of warm and cold air are possible once the snow recedes in Canada, the warmer months are devoid of long periods of stormy weather. Summer weather patterns consist mostly of fronts crossing the United States. Bringing in slightly cooler air, the fronts herald their approach with brief, intense showers.

May brings spring fever. School attendance drops as the temperature rises. Suckers swim up from the lakes to spawn in our streams. It is spring in the hills and lakes region of Maine.

Now it's time for some speculation. Is the drought of last summer truly gone? Experts are saying the the copious amounts of

precipitation have solved the dry well problem, but, as I have said, winter and summer weather patterns are quite different. Could we see another drought this summer, with its problem of forest fires? What if we have a rainless May?

Even if summer weather patterns are not as exciting as the winter patterns with their storms, we can still worry about the drought and the heat. And that reminds me, how much wood should we store up for next winter? □

*Burns, a sophomore at Oxford Hills High School, is a weather observer for WCSH-TV.*

# CORRECTION:

*Due to a typesetting error in the March issue, warmer temperatures experienced at higher elevations were attributed to cooling air becoming less dense and flowing into the valleys. Actually, cooling air becomes more dense, not less.* —Ed.



## The Border

This fence  
that separates  
one side  
of the hill  
from  
the other  
& holds  
the live stock  
to their paths,  
cannot  
keep  
the grass  
from  
wandering.

*Dana Lowell  
Buckfield*



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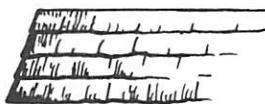


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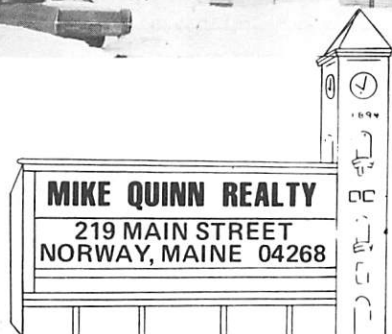
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**FOR SALE IN THE HARRISON/BRIDGTON AREA: RANCH CHALET**—charming home set back from the road on about five acres in an easily-accessible area with a White Mtn. view from the wrap-around deck, pretty lawn with trees and shrubs, double garage. Living room has fireplace and three sets insulated double glass doors, large den with Franklin, two bedrooms, full basement. All very well-insulated and economically heated with baseboard H/W heat and/or wood stoves (included). Drilled well with excellent water supply. Includes Washer, Dryer, Refrigerator, Jenn-air stove, Dishwasher, hand-woven drapes. Especially nice retirement home, easy to maintain and in excellent condition. Immediate occupancy. **\$49,500**

**COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ON BUSY STREET:** In Norway-Paris. Building in good condition, suitable for offices or shop, etc. Room for expansion. Large parking area. Excellent exposure. **\$55,000**

**A RARE OPPORTUNITY:** A large beautiful Cape high on a hill overlooking a lovely pastoral scene. Built about 10 years ago with SPACE in mind and beauty of surroundings. The living room is 26' long with fireplace, small cozy study with shelves and storage, large dining room, huge kitchen with enclosed pantry shelves, three bedrooms, double closets, built-in storage all over. Full basement with fireplace, H/W furnace. Breezeway, double garage, terraced lawns, garden area, over 20 acres. About 10 miles from Norway-Paris area. **\$78,000**

**ON PIKE'S HILL IN NORWAY:** Building lot, surveyed and soil tested. About 6½ acres with over 500' on road. Wooded. Walk to lake. **\$8,500**

**COTTAGE FOR \$27,500:** Two bedroom, lakefront cottage with fireplace, screened porch, sandy beach and privacy. Excellent condition and furnished.

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...Page 58

Japanese millet. Price of seed tends to decide between the two. Millet may cost more per pound, but a pound will cover much more ground.

Manures of varying kinds, mulches and composts all are excellent for adding fibers to soil and they at the same time contribute notably to fertility. (Next month, I'll try that subject.) But availability of sufficient quantities may be a problem and the expense of hauling may be excessive.

Clay soil is sometimes modified by the addition of sawdust. Ice-house sawdust was often used in earlier times, and since it had rotted some before application, the method made some sense. The application of green sawdust has the drawback of reducing, at least for a while, the amount of available nitrogen in the soil. If once could pile on the sawdust, and then spread hen manure over it, one would have a pretty good thing.

But enough. Soil, as I said, is something to think about. Some mention should be made of soil micro-organisms (bacteria, fungi), but I'll stop now before I become hopelessly mired. □

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